Nonnus of Panopolis in Context III

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Nonnus of Panopolis in Context III

Old Questions and New Perspectives

Edited by

Filip Doroszewski
Katarzyna Jażdżewska

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In memory of
Henryk Wójtowicz (1928–2012)
and Pierre Chuvin (1943–2016)

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Preface

If at the beginning of the 2010s there was no doubt that Nonnian studies were gaining momentum, today we can safely say that, in the last decade, developments in the field have been simply epic. Like many great things in the history of civilization, the boom started in Crete, where the international congress "Nonnus of Panopolis in Context," the first conference devoted solely to the poet and his world, was held in Rethymno in May 2011. After that, events moved swiftly: the subsequent conferences in this series took place in Vienna (2013), Warsaw (2015), and Ghent (2018). Nonnus-related topics were springing up like mushrooms at other conferences on Late Antiquity and Byzantine times—the two periods that claim rights to the poet's legacy. Finally, many books and innumerable papers on Nonnus' works have seen the light of publication, to mention only the proceedings of the two first conferences (*Nonnus of Panopolis in Context: Poetry and Cultural Milieu in Late Antiquity*, edited by Konstantinos Spanoudakis and *Nonnus of Panopolis in Context II: Poetry, Religion, and Society*, edited by Herbert Bannert and Nicole Kröll) and the bulky *Brill's Companion to Nonnus of Panopolis*, edited by Domenico Accorinti, which secured the Panopolitan a prominent place (if anyone still doubted it) in the pantheon of Late Antique authors. To put it briefly, from an obscure curiosity Nonnus' poetry has grown into a major topic of classical scholarship.

However popular it is now, the Panopolitan's oeuvre has by no means become *terra cognita*. Quite the reverse: without much exaggeration we may say that despite the scholarly work that has been done so far, Nonnus' poetry still poses a major challenge to researchers. On the one hand, the old questions about the poet's identity, the dating of his works, or his attitude toward the Latin tradition remain valid. On the other, once the classicizing prejudice that led scholars to think of the baroque style of the *Dionysiaca* and the *Paraphrasis* as decadent and boring had been abandoned, the poems' originality and depth were acknowledged and provoked fascinating novel questions informed by development of new theoretical approaches. Like every great author, Nonnus offers the reader a universe unto itself—an internally coherent world that can be explored at different levels and from different perspectives. In this world, the classical and Christian traditions form a harmonious and meaningful whole: they legitimize each other as Jesus makes come true what had vaguely been expected of Dionysus. Nonnus' poetry perfectly exemplifies the intricacies and ingenuity of Late Antiquity and provides an invaluable key to understanding a period that had long been forgotten and misunderstood.

With the present volume, Nonnian scholarship takes an important step toward making both Nonnus' legacy and his times more accessible to the modern mind. It brings together twenty-six contributions written by both established authorities and younger scholars engaged in pioneering research. Most of the chapters stem from papers given at the "Nonnus of Panopolis in Context III: Old Questions and New Perspectives" conference that was held at Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski University in Warsaw, September 17–19, 2015. Most sadly, the great absentee is Pierre Chuvin, whose illness and subsequent death prevented him from contributing to this volume.

The volume opens with an introductory chapter by the doyen of Nonnian studies, Gennaro D'Ippolito. This contribution, which will certainly become a reference for future scholars working on the poet, offers a comprehensive and up-to-date treatment of scholarly discussions concerning the Panopolitan and his works: the authorship of both the *Dionysiaca* and the *Paraphrasis*, the poet's chronology and identity, as well as his sources. The highlight of the chapter is, no doubt, the section addressing the much-debated question of Nonnus' knowledge of Latin poetry. An extensive examination of the topic leads D'Ippolito to conclude that the poet must have known the works of Virgil and Ovid.

The twenty-five chapters that follow have been divided into six thematic sections. Part 1, "Nonnus and the Literary Tradition," consists of six contributions. It opens with a chapter by Berenice Verhelst, who discusses metaleptic passages in the *Dionysiaca*; that is, the passages in which the narrative boundaries are transgressed, either by the narrator or by fictional characters. As the author demonstrates, the effect of Nonnus' metalepsis is frequently humoristic and/or draws the reader's attention to the fictionality of the narrated world. The chapter by Laura Miguélez-Cavero examines Nonnus' use of encomiastic speech in the *Dionysiaca*, in particular in the episode of Staphylus in books 18 and 19. In her contribution, Anna Lefteratou takes up the transformation of Aura in book 48 of the *Dionysiaca* to show Nonnus' creative use of the metamorphosis literature that results in an ingenious variation on the theme—classicizing and rich in Christian allusions at the same time. The relationships Dionysus has with young men (especially Ampelus) in books 10 and 11 of the *Dionysiaca* provide the subject for the chapter by Benjamin Acosta-Hughes, who demonstrates how Nonnus' verse is linked to Hellenistic models. The Ampelus episode is also the focus of Katerina Carvounis and Sophia Papaioannou, who trace in it the possible influences from the Latin tradition, and especially Virgil and Ovid. Finally, Gianfranco Agosti makes a strong argument for the importance of acknowledging the Coptic cultural background, so far mostly ignored, for a better understanding of the poetry of Nonnus.

Part 2, “Literary Structure and Motifs in the *Dionysiaca*,” contains seven chapters. A. Sophie Schoess explores the concept of looking and being looked at in the episode of Actaeon who, after having seen the bathing Artemis, is changed into a stag and dies torn to pieces—but his true identity is somehow preserved in a tombstone monument visualizing the hero as an animal with a human face. Camille Geisz focuses on some aspects of narrative structure of the *Dionysiaca* as she analyzes its eight bathing scenes using the concept of “spatial form.” Nestan Egetashvili’s contribution exemplifies the poet’s penchant for playing with opposites by illustrating how he juxtaposes things and events in order to emphasize their differences and similarities. Marta Otlewska-Jung examines the notion of harmony in the epic and comes up with a conclusion that to Nonnus the harmony is not only the force that maintains the cosmic order but also the structural principle of his poetry. Awakenings (especially that of Ariadne) come under close scrutiny in the chapter by David Hernández de la Fuente, who leaves the reader in no doubt that they serve Nonnus to metaphorically mark the transition from the old to the new life. By comparing Nonnus’ Aura and Colluthus’ Aphrodite, Cosetta Cadau points to different models of femininity that existed within Late Antique society: that of a sworn virgin on the one hand, and that of a dedicated wife on the other. The last chapter of Part 2, authored by Fotini Hadjittofi, investigates the shift in gender roles alluded to in the episodes of Europa and Cadmus: while the abducted Europa in fact dominates over her male abductor, Cadmus is both effeminate and powerful at the same time.

The exegesis of the fourth Gospel in Nonnus’ *Paraphrasis* is the main subject of the five chapters making up Part 3 (“Exegesis through Paraphrase”). Roberta Franchi looks closely at the poet’s pneumatology as she examines the symbols and metaphors, usually of philosophical origin, he uses in reference to the Holy Spirit. The contribution by Jane Lightfoot clearly shows that in both Nonnus’ poems books and writings are always presented as endowed with voice: they speak aloud the words of their authors. Margherita Maria Di Nino and Maria Ypsilanti explore the way in which Nonnus renders the Johannine parable of the Good Shepherd and describe a variety of paraphrastic techniques put to work by the poet. The application of one of these techniques, amplification, by two biblical poets, Nonnus and Juvencus, is dealt with in the chapter by Michael Paschalis who demonstrates that the latter, unlike Nonnus, makes almost no use of it. In the closing chapter, Laura Franco and Maria Ypsilanti analyze Nonnus’ depiction of John the Baptist and Pontius Pilate and provide a detailed overview of classical, biblical, and patristic sources employed by the poet to expand the text of John.

Part 4, “Nonnus and Late Antique Culture,” consists of three chapters. In the first, Ewa Osek compares the killing of the Dircean dragon by Cadmus in the

Dionysiaca with the sacrificing of a snake by Helenus in the Orphic *Lithica* and suggests that both descriptions were influenced by the same esoteric author. Konstantinos Spanoudakis speaks of a great popularity that Theocritus and his poetry enjoyed in Late Antiquity, and discusses spiritual and mystical interpretations of *Idylls* 1 and 7; his study provides a valuable context for Nonnus' allusions to the bucolic poet. In her contribution, Nicole Kröll investigates representation of Athens and Berytus (hailed by the poet as the New Athens) in the *Dionysiaca* and their cultural significance as marks of Greek identity.

Finally, four chapters gathered in Part 5 discuss reception of Nonnus. This section opens with a contribution by Enrico Magnelli who focuses on a short hexametric poem by a certain John of Memphis and offers a new critical edition along with an English translation and a commentary. Mary Whitby discusses the epigrammatic poetry of George of Pisidia and demonstrates that aesthetically and intellectually it belongs to the world of Nonnus and his followers. Domenico Accorinti re-examines the scanty evidence for the reception of Nonnus' works in the Byzantine times and formulates some speculative hypotheses about why the literature of the period mostly passes over the poet's oeuvre in silence. Fabian Sieber surveys the studies done on the poet in Germany from 1900 to 1976 pointing to the fact that Nonnus' works attracted the most attention from German scholars during the inter- and post-war periods.

The editors would like to express sincere gratitude to all those who supported them in making this *mega biblion* possible. The "Nonnus of Panopolis in Context III" conference was generously sponsored by the President of Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski University, while the authorities of the Faculty of Humanities part-financed the editorial works. All the Brill staff, and especially Giulia Moriconi, were wonderfully supportive through the publication process. We are grateful to Katherine LaFrance and Mary Whitby who offered invaluable help with English language revisions in some sections of the volume. Finally, the editors thank all scholars who, during the unusually hot days of September 2015, came to Bielany Forest nature reserve in Warsaw to discuss Nonnus' verse, and then kindly agreed to contribute to this volume.

Filip Doroszewski and Katarzyna Jażdżewska
Warsaw, May 2020

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Abbreviations

BKT	*Berliner Klassikertexte*. Berlin, 1904–.
BGU	*Berliner griechische Urkunden*. Ägyptische Urkunden aus den Königlichen (später: Staatlichen) Museen zu Berlin, 20 vols. Berlin, 1895–2014.
CAAG	M. Berthelot, Ch.-E. Ruelle (eds.), *Collection des anciens alchimistes grecs*. Paris, 1887–1888.
CPG	M. Geerards et al. (eds.), *Clavis Patrum Graecorum*, 6 vols. Turnhout, 1974–1998.
DELG	P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*, 4 vols. Paris, 1968–1980.
DNP	H. Cancik, H. Schneider (eds.), *Der neue Pauly: Enzyklopädie der Antike*, 16 vols. Stuttgart/Weimar, 1996–2003.
DPhA	R. Goulet (ed.), *Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques*. 7 vols. and *Supplément*. Paris, 1989–2018.
FGrHist	F. Jacoby (ed.), *Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker*. Berlin/Leiden 1923–.
FHN	T. Eide, T. Hægg, et al. (eds.), *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum*, 4 vols. Bergen, 1994–2000.
GDRK	E. Heitsch, *Die griechischen Dichterfragmente der römischen Kaiserzeit*, 2 vols. Göttingen, 1963^2–1964.
GGM	C. Müller, *Geographi Graeci Minores*, 2 vols. Paris, 1855–1861 (repr. Hildesheim, 1965).
GPh	A.S.F. Gow, D.L. Page, *The Greek Anthology: The Garland of Philip and Some Contemporary Epigrams*. Cambridge, 1968.
GVI	W. Peek, *Griechische Versinschriften*. I: *Grabepigramme*. Berlin, 1955.
HE	A.S.F. Gow, D.L. Page, *The Greek Anthology: Hellenistic Epigrams*. Cambridge, 1965.
IMEG	E. Bernand, *Inscriptions métriques de l'Égypte gréco-romaine*. Paris, 1969.
Lampe	G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*. Oxford, 1961.
LBG	E. Trapp, *Lexikon zur byzantinischen Gräzität*, 2 vols. Wien, 1994–2017.
LIMC	H.C. Ackermann, J.-R. Gisler et al. (eds.), *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, 18 vols. Zürich/Munich, 1981–1999; Suppl. 2009.
LfgrE	B. Snell, H. Erbse, *Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos*, 4 vols. Göttingen, 1955–2010.
LSJ	H.G. Liddell, R. Scott, H.S. Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, with a Revised Supplement edited by P.G.W. Glare, with the assistance of A.A. Thompson. Oxford, 1996.
MT	Masoretic Text

Peek	W. Peek, *Lexikon zu den Dionysiaka des Nonnos*, 4 vols. Hildesheim, 1868–1975.
Pf.	R. Pfeiffer (ed.), *Callimachus*, 2 vols. Oxford 1949–1953.
PG	J.-P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca*, 162 vols. Paris, 1857–1912.
PLRE	A.H.M. Jones, J.R. Martindale, J. Morris (eds.), *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, 3 vols. Cambridge.
PO	R. Graffin, F. Nau (eds.), *Patrologia Orientalis*. Paris/Turnhout, 1903–.
PSI	*Papiri greci e latini*. Pubblicazioni della Società Italiana per la ricerca dei papiri greci e latini in Egitto. Firenze, 1912–.
RAC	T. Klauser et al. (eds.), *Reallexikon fiir Antike und Christentum*. Stuttgart, 1950–.
RE	G. Wissowa et al. (eds.), *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, 51 vols. Stuttgart/Munich, 1893–1980.
SB	F. Preisigke et al. (eds.), *Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten*. Berlin, 1915–.
SC	*Sources chrétiennes*
SEG	*Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*. Leiden, 1923–.
SGO	R. Merkelbach, J. Stauber, *Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten*, 5 vols. Stuttgart/Leipzig, 1998–2004.
SH	H. Lloyd-Jones, P. Parsons (eds.), *Supplementum Hellenisticum*. Berlin/New York, 1983.
SOL	*Suda On Line*: Byzantine Lexicography, http://www.stoa.org/sol/.
TLG	*Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*
TM	Trismegistos Texts Database, https://www.trismegistos.org/tm/index.php.
TrGf	B. Snell, R. Kannicht, S. Radt (eds.), *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, 5 vols. Göttingen, 1971–2004.

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INTRODUCTION

Solved and Still Unsolved Issues about Nonnus and His Works

Gennaro D'Ippolito

1 Introduction

A comparison between two comprehensive entries distant from one another in time—the item "Nonnos" by Rudolf Keydell (*RE* 1936) and an analogous entry by Domenico Accorinti (*RAC* 2013)[1]—clearly indicates how much progress Nonnian criticism has made over nearly eight decades.

A quantitative balance is immediately apparent. The time has certainly passed for the ponderous *Histoire de la littérature grecque* by the Croiset brothers, last reprinted in the 1950s, the first four volumes of which are devoted to the five centuries of the Ionian-Dorian and Attic ages, with only the fifth volume devoted to the nine centuries of the Alexandrian and Roman ages: with a true "esplosione di tardoantico," to use Andrea Giardina's effective image,[2] studies in the field, in addition to favoring a reading *iuxta propria principia* of literary works free of a classicist bias, have multiplied to such an extent that it has become arduous to acquire complete information about them all. Considering this difficulty, I hope the reader will forgive my choices, which contain many lacunae.

With these premises in mind, we can distinguish *grosso modo* two stages in the literary-critical recognition of Nonnus since the 1960s. The first is marked by recognition of the *Dionysiaca*, considered his most important work; the second, by recognition of the *Paraphrase of the Gospel of John*, which some now consider more significant than the former. With some simplification, we can give credit for the first shift to Keydell's critical edition of the *Dionysiaca*,[3] which provided a detailed analysis of the poet's language in the introduction. Another critical event in the increasingly positive evaluation of the poem through the lens of the Late Antique Baroque came a few years later,

1 Keydell 1936; Accorinti 2013.
2 Giardina 1999.
3 Keydell 1959.

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with my *Studi Nonniani*.[4] Finally, there was the *Lexicon zu den Dionysiaka des Nonnos* by Werner Peek,[5] the importance of which is somewhat weakened by a couple of defects: the first is having neglected the *Paraphrase*; the second is having rather naïvely trusted, on the subject of neologisms, the Lexicon of Liddell–Scott–Jones, which, although valuable for those studying Greek up to the Alexandrian age, it is much less so for those studying the Roman age, since the editors made the unscholarly decision to exclude all Christian texts, and thereby distorted the image of authors who produced work within both traditions, like Nonnus.

A more modern approach began in the 1980s, marked by an in-depth study that was not only literary but also historical and religious, and, above all, by full recognition of the *Paraphrase* as an autonomous poem. For the *Dionysiaca*, this change came with the publication of two editions with a translation and commentary: the French edition by Francis Vian and his team, begun in 1976 and completed thirty years later in 2006, comprising eighteen volumes in total;[6] and the Italian edition, published in 2003–2004 in four volumes and edited, respectively, by Daria Gigli Piccardi (who was also the coordinator), Fabrizio Gonnelli, Gianfranco Agosti, and Domenico Accorinti.[7] Mention must also be made of the translation into Italian by Maria Maletta, with an introduction by Dario Del Corno and a commentary by Francesco Tissoni;[8] this was the first translation to be published in Italy, but to date it has not gone beyond book 36. For the *Paraphrase* this shift came with the publication of individual translated editions with commentaries by Enrico Livrea, who inaugurated the series in 1989 with an edition of book 18, and by his pupils, limited so far to books 1–2, 4–6, 13, 18, and 20,[9] to which must be added book 11, published by Konstantinos Spanoudakis with an English translation.[10]

4 D'Ippolito 1964 (cf. Agosti 2016).

5 Peek 1968–1975.

6 Vian 1976; Chuvin 1976; Chuvin 1992; Chrétien 1985; Vian 1995; Gerlaud 1994; Gerbeaux and Vian 1992; Hopkinson and Vian 1994; Vian 1990; Vian 1997; Gerlaud 2005; Frangoulis and Gerlaud 2006; Frangoulis 1999; Simon 1999; Chuvin and Fayant 2006; Simon, 2004; Fayant 2000; Vian 2003.

7 Gigli Piccardi 2003; Gonnelli 2003; Agosti 2004; Accorinti 2004.

8 Maletta 1997–2005 (cf. D'Ippolito 2004).

9 De Stefani 2002; Livrea 2000; Caprara 2005; Agosti 2003; Franchi 2013; Greco 2004; Livrea 1989; Accorinti 1996.

10 Spanoudakis 2014c.

2 The "Nonnian Question"

The most important development concerns the solution to the so-called *quaestio Nonniana*, which arises from the difficulty of accepting single authorship of two works so different at first sight as the *Dionysiaca* and the *Paraphrase*. This expression was introduced by Vian,[11] in analogy to the "Homeric Question"; he used it in reference to the debate between Unitarians and Analysts regarding the *Dionysiaca*, but the phrase was subsequently adopted by Livrea with a broader meaning, which we use here.[12]

Currently, the most radical solution, that of denying Nonnian authorship of the *Paraphrase*, is almost exclusively maintained by the American scholar Lee Francis Sherry,[13] who starts from a position taken up by Vian, but later wholly rejected by him, according to which the *Paraphrase* "est un modeste exercice de versification et d'amplification qui conviendrait mieux à un débutant."[14] In support of this denied paternity, Sherry invokes the authoritative words of Scheindler,[15] to date the most recent publisher of the complete text of the *Paraphrase*: "Nam in utraque (i.e. in rebus metricis et grammaticis) paraphrasis a *Dionysiacis* adeo differt, ut de eodem auctore dubitare possis"; but he fails to quote a subsequent passage in which the editor, explaining that these were due to difficulties the poet had to face to remain faithful to the *Vorlage*, admits that the differences encountered in the *Paraphrase* are "leviora menda metrica."[16] Sherry's conclusion is that the author cannot be Nonnus, but is instead an imitator.

Thus, almost all Nonnian criticism has always accepted Nonnus' paternity of both works. At the same time, three different solutions, today all outdated, were offered to explain the evident contrast between the pagan themes of the *Dionysiaca* and the Christian themes of the *Paraphrase*. One solution proposed considering the two poems as literary exercises, though ones written in a good poetic style, that do not express the true convictions of their author.[17] If instead, as most have thought, Nonnus' work is considered to be permeated with sincere faith, pagan or Christian, two other solutions are possible: apostasy or conversion. In fact, the suggestion of apostasy was a purely theoretical possibility and

11 Vian 1980, 78–81.
12 Livrea 1987, 97 (= Livrea 1991, 439).
13 Sherry 1991, 1996; Coulie, Sherry, and CETEDOC 1995.
14 Vian 1976, XII. Later he will completely change this opinion.
15 Scheindler 1881, XXXIX.
16 Scheindler 1881, XL.
17 Golega 1930, 79–88; Cataudella 1936, 176–184; String 1966, 71; substantially also Chuvin 1986, 2006.

was never pursued: Růžena Dostálová-Jeništová proposed it, though she also acknowledged the need for an in-depth study on the topic.[18] This scholar discovered that Nonnus was a popular Christian name, belonging to the Syriac sphere: thus, on the basis of the common opinion that the *Paraphrase* was a youthful work, she suggested that the poet might have subsequently professed paganism, preserving in the *Dionysiaca* ideas and memories of the Christian environment of his youth.[19]

Hence, conversion continued to be the solution generally adopted in the last century. As Hans Bogner has argued,[20] this hypothesis would be valid, since in the *Dionysiaca* Nonnus does not treat mythology as a simple poetic theme but developed, with sincere commitment, themes related to the pagan religion of his time, which included magic, astrology, theurgy, Orphism, and mystic cults, while, on the other hand, the *Paraphrase* testifies to his interest in Christian theology. This idea had already been advanced by Keydell,[21] who believed that Nonnus' conversion to Christianity on the one hand prompted him to write the *Paraphrase*, and prevented him from finishing his poem on Dionysus on the other.

But the idea of conversion has been set aside, and Nonnus is now considered to have been a Christian when he wrote both of these works. The generally accepted solution to the *quaestio Nonniana* today is one that can be defined as "syncretistic": the *Dionysiaca* and *Paraphrase* are manifestations of the syncretistic cultural environment of Panopolis,[22] characterized by a philosophical-theological fusion, and Nonnus is a representative of the pagan-Christian religious syncretism of Late Antiquity,[23] together with other great eclectics, such as Ausonius, Palladas, Claudian, Synesius, Sidonius Apollinaris, and Dracontius.

This conclusion was reached through a series of research efforts and concomitant evidence concerning both the historical and archaeological contexts, as well as linguistic and literary parallels. The archaeological evidence is particularly interesting.[24] We have, for instance, a fragment of fabric possessed by the Abegg-Stiftung in Riggisberg that dates back to the fourth century AD and originates from Achmîm-Panopolis: it depicts Dionysiac themes and was found in a Christian grave alongside other fabrics representing evangelical

18 Dostálová-Jeništová 1957a, 1958.
19 The idea reappears in Villarrubia Medina 2006, 451.
20 Bogner 1934.
21 Keydell 1932, 202 (= Keydell 1982, 514); 1936, 905, 910–911, 915–916.
22 Miguélez-Cavero 2008, 191–263: chap. 3, "The Role of Culture and Education in Panopolis (3rd–6th c. AD)."
23 Cf. among others Gigli Piccardi 1985, 212–213; Shorrock 2011.
24 Willers 1992; Hernández de la Fuente 2002, 19–23; McNally 2002; Cameron 2007, 37–38.

themes. This find helps to prove that Panopolis was dominated by the same syncretism reflected in Nonnus' work.[25] If we look at the relationships between the *Dionysiaca* and the *Paraphrase*, we are struck by numerous shared thematic features: on one side, evangelical elements in the personality and vicissitudes of Dionysus, on the other, Dionysiac motifs in the presentation of Christ.[26] I will mention some of these that have been the object of thorough comparative analyses: the transformation of water into wine at the marriage at Cana and the analogous metamorphosis of the waters of Lake Astacis (*Par.* 2.35–38, *Dion.* 14.411–417);[27] the well dug by Jacob in Samaria and the one dug by Danaos in Argos (*Par.* 4.11–74, *Dion.* 4.249–284);[28] the healing of a man born blind (*Par.* 9.1–65, *Dion.* 25.281–291), with the use of analogous expressions and even of a whole line repeated (*Par.* 9.43 = *Dion.* 25.291), which makes the much more developed story in the *Paraphrase*, the certain source of the five lines of the *Dionysiaca*;[29] the resurrection of Lazarus and that of Tylus (*Par.* 11.1–180, *Dion.* 25.451–552);[30] the arrival of Christ in Jerusalem and that of Dionysus in Athens (*Par.* 12.51–58, *Dion.* 47.1–33);[31] the avarice condemned in Judas (φιλοκτεάνοιο φονῆος: *Par.* 13.113) and attributed by the same epithet to the Indian Melaneus (φιλοκτεάνῳ Μελανῆι: *Dion.* 29.51), who, allured by rich gifts, agrees to try to kill Dionysus; Jesus' arrest by the Jews in the Garden of Gethsemane and that of Dionysus by Pentheus' servants (*Par.* 18.1–63, *Dion.* 45.228–239);[32] in the Icarius episode (*Dion.* 47.1–264), the assimilation of the protagonist to Christ, of his assassins to the Jews, and of Erigone to Mary Magdalene (*Par.* 19).[33] But the analogies also involve the deep structure: the main actantial model that I have noticed in the *Dionysiaca* and that I will explain further on is similar to the one that can be derived from the *Paraphrase*.[34] The subject in both cases is a man-god, born of God the father/Zeus (Sender) and of a virgin mother, Mary/Aura, followed by faithful followers, apostles/Bacchants (Helper category) and opposed by men, Jews, Caiaphas/Indians, Pentheus, and

25 Willers 1992.
26 On Christian themes in the *Dionysiaca* and pagan themes in the *Paraphrase* see Shorrock 2016 and Spanoudakis 2016 respectively.
27 See Livrea 2000, 76–92, 206–211. On the terminology of the Bacchic mysteries in the Cana episode, but also in Christ's conversation with the Samaritan woman (*Par.* 4.97–118) see Doroszewski 2016.
28 See Gigli Piccardi 1995.
29 See Agosti 2004, 105–107.
30 See Spanoudakis 2014b, 334–358.
31 An affinity noticed and analyzed by Accorinti 2004, 34–36.
32 See Gigli Piccardi 1984.
33 See Spanoudakis 2007.
34 D'Ippolito 1995.

by superhuman beings, Devil/Giants (Opponent category); the Object is partly the drink itself, wine, which, as a product of the Subject (wine from Bacchus-vine/blood of Christ), frees humanity (Receiver) from sin and pain, one looking to a soteriology of the soul, the other to terrestrial comfort.[35] From a general point of view, I fully agree with Agosti, who sees in the *Paraphrase* an intercultural dialogue based upon the literary "postmodern" practice of usurpation and contrastive imitation.[36]

A comparison between the *Paraphrase* and the *Dionysiaca* with regard to metrics and style generally led to a negative judgment about the former; its presumed inferiority was explained as being due to Nonnus not having fully reached artistic maturity. However, Agosti, through a thorough and comprehensive analysis,[37] demonstrated that there is substantial homogeneity between both metric systems and that the presence of prosodic anomalies is justified by the different literary genres of the two works and by the need of the *Paraphrase* to adhere to the text of the Gospel of John.[38] As I have recently observed,[39] homogeneity is also reflected in the formulaic system.

However, the shortcoming of the syncretistic perspective is that it ignores the great degree of sincere enthusiasm that animated the author of the two works.[40] Therefore, another solution is proposed, one which I consider fully convincing. Recovering in part the precursory judgment of Golega,[41] according to whom the two poems present an identical style and identical metrics, today we must consider them not as having been written one after the other or in mutual opposition, but as having been written in the same period. They are, above all, animated by the same enthusiastic spirit and by the same poetics: the basic spirit is Christian, and the intent is not, as Golega maintained, a rhetorical exercise but a defense at one and the same time of both Christian and "pagan" values. As for the *Dionysiaca*, "if the poet has a message, it is to celebrate the ancient literature which he has gathered together in his own way into a kind of encyclopaedia."[42] In fact, this important solution to the biggest problem relating to Nonnus would not have been found if there had not been a parallel in-depth historical recognition, free from classicist prejudices, of both the *Dionysiaca* and, above all, the *Paraphrase*.

35 On this distinction cf. also Vian 1994, 214–233 (= Vian 2005, 531–550).
36 Agosti 2011.
37 Agosti 2003, 175–210.
38 Agosti 2003, 205.
39 D'Ippolito 2016.
40 Cf. Cameron 2007, 36–38, 43–44.
41 Golega 1930, 80–81.
42 Liebeschuetz 2001, 234.

3 Recognition of the *Paraphrase*

The merit of having promoted and appreciated the *Paraphrase* must be attributed, above all, to Livrea, who at the end of the 1980s initiated the previously mentioned series of critical editions of books accompanied by translations and exhaustive and rigorous commentaries. The latest developments in criticism have re-evaluated the *Paraphrase* as a work of "autonomous" poetry, completely overturning the severe judgment of those who considered it a modest juvenile exercise.

As Livrea has shown,[43] the originality of Nonnus' work is evident if we consider the paraphrastic genre to which it belongs. In particular, a comparison with the extant works of Eudocia and Apollinaris, versifications slavishly faithful to the biblical text, highlights the significant differences between the *Paraphrase* and its model, which are amplified through various literary traditions and, at the same time, interpreted according to the hermeneutic stance of Cyril. As for the ultimate meaning, aim and objectives of the *Paraphrase*, I believe that the two theses dominant in the last century are outdated. One was the aforementioned early thesis of Vian, who considered it a rhetorical exercise. The other thesis proposed that the *Paraphrase* was composed for an instrumental use connected to worship and edification.[44] Today we can say that two aspects of this challenging work make it so unique, one connected with its form, the other with its content.

From a formal point of view, *amplificatio* of John's text together with the use of a refined and musical hexameter, the highest of the pagan meters, aims to make the Christian message acceptable to a cultured class of Egyptians, who are largely but not entirely Christians. This reminds me of Gregory of Nazianzus. Speaking of "forme e funzioni della poesia nella grecità tardoantica"[45] and subsequently of Gregory's poetics, I wrote that we see him enacting "una grande operazione culturale, purtroppo senza adeguato seguito, la creazione di una poesia cristiana greca formalmente impiantata nella tradizione pagana."[46] Today, however, I feel that I have to correct my observation at least in part. Nonnus, who read Gregory's poetry and drew from it,[47] surely must have seen in him a model which succeeded in an exemplary fashion in reconciling a pagan form and motifs with Christian poetry. Gregory's

43 Livrea 1989, 36–42.
44 Herzog 1975, 60–68.
45 D'Ippolito 2004–2005, 139.
46 D'Ippolito 2008, 411.
47 D'Ippolito 1994.

aims are substantially analogous to those that Nonnus was to choose a century later: the 103 iambic trimeters of poem 2.1.39, known by the title *In suos versus*, contain the manifesto of his poetics, which I have condensed in the expression "poesia come tetrafarmaco."[48] Speaking of the second of the four medicines (2.1.39.37–46), Gregory, addressing young Christians who love letters and the pagan tradition itself, presents poetry as a privileged form of the teachings of Christianity, an objective remedy making it possible to teach these concepts in a pleasant way, sweetening the bitterness of admonishments and reducing the tension of precepts with the agreeability proper to meter. It is to be noticed that the use of poetry for teaching purposes was not alien to the Church Fathers, nurtured by schools of rhetoric. But a further function of Gregory's poetry, presented as the third point (2.1.39.47–53), is also near to Nonnian poetics: it is the emulation of great pagan poetry, through which Christianity can create an authentic Christian poetry able to go beyond the former.

From a doctrinal point of view, the theological *interpretatio* furnishes an exegesis of the Gospel of John that adheres to the ecclesial and political demands of the Alexandrian Patriarchate, which found a defender of its diphysite orthodoxy in Cyril. I think Nonnus' choice of the fourth Gospel must have been influenced by the *Commentary on John's Gospel* that Cyril wrote in those years (between 425 and 428),[49] which the author of the *Paraphrase* not only knew but certainly also followed. As this poetry was firmly rooted in society, the operation must also have been stimulated by the interest aroused in the Neoplatonic milieu by the fourth Gospel, and by theological disputes on the nature of Christ which at that time animated Christian communities.[50]

Thus, after centuries of lethargy, the *Paraphrase*, this "splendido capolavoro dell'antichità senescente,"[51] must be valued as an autonomous product of literary creation based on the theological interpretation of the Gospel of John, a product that on one side is linked to the Jewish-Christian tradition of testamentary poetry in Greek, and on the other, creatively continues the great Homeric-Alexandrian poetic tradition. The work is now considered not "una pedissequa transcodificazione in linguaggio alto del Vangelo" but instead "una compiuta operazione esegetica e poetica."[52]

48 D'Ippolito 2008.
49 Mahé 1907.
50 On the relationship of Nonnus with Alexandrian Christianity, see Agosti 2014.
51 Livrea 1989, 42.
52 Agosti 2003, 232.

4 Recognition of the *Dionysiaca*

Up until the middle of the last century, the *Dionysiaca* was seen as disorderly, both textually and structurally. Back in the nineteenth century, Comte de Marcellus was convinced that the text of the poem was in a state of serious disorder, for which he did not blame the author but the transmission; in particular, he blamed the first publisher for an apparent confusion of the pages.[53] Consequently, he did not hesitate to make frequent long transpositions, which caused major upheavals in the text. Apart from this unacceptable operation, in the 1920s and 1930s two great Nonnian critics, Rudolf Keydell and Paul Collart,[54] bewildered by frequent repetitions, gaps, and inconsistencies, almost all of which later proved to be merely apparent, proposed a theory on the composition of the *Dionysiaca*. Both were convinced that Nonnus had not been able or willing to finish his poem (an opinion that, with some reservations, one can still share today).[55] For Keydell, the poet started by composing an account of the war against the Indians, which he then enriched with a long continuation and preamble (a theory that recalls the *Erweiterungstheorie* applied to the Homeric poems by Gottfried Hermann), whereas in Collart's view he accumulated various poetic exercises, which he next decided to put together into a single work (a sort of *Einzelliedertheorie*, like the one applied to Homer by Karl Lachmann).

Half a century after the edition by Arthur Ludwich,[56] who was the first to use the *Laurentianus* XXXII *16* (L) and to recognize in it the oldest of the extant manuscripts, Keydell in his edition made a radical simplification of the critical apparatus, eliminating readings of other codices, all *descripti*.[57] In the meantime, in 1940, an edition of the poem in three volumes was published by the Loeb Classical Library.[58] Its text, edited by Levi Robert Lind, is substantially that of Ludwich, with a few changes aimed at restoring the manuscript reading; it is not accompanied by a critical apparatus, which is in part replaced by fifteen pages of *Addenda critica* introducing the first volume (XXVII–XLI). The greatest value of this edition lies in the prose translation by W.H.D. Rouse, which is the first English translation of the poem and the one to which English-speaking critics usually refer, although it is in many

53 Marcellus 1856.
54 Keydell 1927, 1932 (Keydell 1982, 443–484, 485–514); Collart 1930.
55 Collart 1930, 48; Keydell 1936, 910–911.
56 Ludwich 1909–1911.
57 Keydell 1959.
58 Rouse, Rose, and Lind 1940.

respects inadequate: indeed, in addition to often being stylistically discontinuous, it often fails to resolve exegetic problems, too often limiting itself to making unusual calques to render Nonnus' bold compounds. The rendering of these compounds is ironically commented on by the reviewer Eugene O'Neill, Jr.: "In reading the English of the Loeb *Dionysiaca* one has the depressing feeling that altogether too many emerited vocables have been rudely Rouse'd from an honorable retirement."[59]

Returning to Keydell's edition: the scholar, on the one hand, simplified the apparatus, while on the other, he was convinced that the *Dionysiaca* were incomplete because of what at that time seemed axiomatic, namely Nonnus' conversion to Christianity. Consequently, he reinforced and emphasized the supposed disorder of the text through recourse to two types of procedures: first, he increased the number of lacunae to as many as 145; second, *liniola directa a sinistra parte apposita notantur versus a Nonno compositi neque tamen cum carmine contesti*, altogether forty-eight cases, distributed in twenty-seven books, of varying ampleness, ranging from a single line (28.44 and 30.9) to thirty-four verses (22.320–353). These lines, seen as being rather incongruent with the context, were marked with a vertical line. The editor also marked "erratic blocks," i.e. sequences of lines that are clearly Nonnian but apparently out of place, indicated by *lineolis interpositis*: these are lines 39.218–407 and 48.152–158, which for various reasons cannot be put elsewhere in the poem.

The failure of the analytical-rationalist, and substantially unhistoric method, that guided the approach to the text of the *Dionysiaca* up to Keydell's edition is clearly seen when we compare these early editions with the eighteen volumes published in the Budé series, as well as with the four volumes of the Italian edition. As the publication of the Budé *Dionysiaca* proceeds, the position of Vian, who is critical of the rationalistic excesses of the analytical method, but not determined to contest its results in the introduction to the first volume (1976), changes in subsequent volumes. Together with his co-workers, he has drastically reduced the number of supposed lacunae and incongruities, mostly attributing them to the Nonnian style, which broke from classical procedures: this way the "blocs erratiques," first seen as incongruous by Vian,[60] are explained as representative of the "Nonnian" order, common to some extent to Late Antique Baroque aesthetics: the fact is that the poet loves juxtaposed and conflicting tableaux, descriptive pauses, continual digressions, not very

59 O'Neill, Jr. 1944, 313.
60 Vian 1976, XXXIX–XL.

consequential passages, a multiplication of points of view, and oxymoronic paradox,[61] and constantly refuses to pursue a logical order.[62] Tissoni, too, in his rich commentary on books 44–46 of the *Pentheid*,[63] though he follows Keydell's edition, finds that the text as handed down is not particularly disturbed: out of a total of sixteen passages judged suspicious by the German scholar because of lacunae or repetitions, he judges only four to be effectively corrupted.[64] As for the text of the *Dionysiaca*, views on its structural disorder have gradually changed, through readings free of classicist prejudices, to it being seen as a composition organized according to specific rules, proper to a poetics differing from those of the ancient models.

It was Viktor Stegemann who demolished the deeply rooted idea of macrostructural disorder in the *Dionysiaca*.[65] In his monograph on astrology and universal history in the poem, he upholds a well-documented theory according to which—assuming that Nonnus' Dionysus has the nature of a king (Alexander the Great) and the nature of a god *Weltheiland*—the poet in his composition followed the rhetorical scheme of a βασιλικὸς λόγος, as recommended by the rhetor Menander,[66] whose τόποι ἐγκωμιαστικοί are προοίμια, γένος (ancestors and parents), πατρίς (native city), γένεσις, ἀνατροφή, πράξεις κατὰ εἰρήνην and κατὰ πόλεμον, ἐπίλογος, and a certain number of συγκρίσεις. This thesis was initially rejected by experts on Nonnus like Collart and Keydell,[67] but without good reason: Nonnus cannot be expected to follow the rhetorical scheme absolutely rigorously, but this theory is certainly the only one that explains convincingly the presumed strangeness of the preamble of no fewer than six books (only in the sixth does he begin to speak of Dionysus with the prophecy of his advent, and the god is only born at the end of the eighth), devoted precisely to the γένος of the god (his ancestors Europa and Cadmus) and the πατρίς (Thebes). Hans Gerstinger arrived independently at his theory of the encomium.[68] Subsequently, Vian did so as well,[69] and after him critics in general accepted the influence of the rhetorical scheme, pointing to its flexibility. Eduard Darius Lasky defines the poem as "an encomium of the god";[70] in

61 D'Ippolito 1964, 56–57, and 1987b; Agosti 1995, 142–143.
62 Simon 1999, 80.
63 Tissoni 1998.
64 Tissoni 1998, 20.
65 Stegemann 1930, 209–230.
66 Men. Rh. Περὶ ἐπιδεικτικῶν 368–377 (76–95 Russell-Wilson).
67 Collart 1930, 275–278; Keydell 1932 (= Keydell 1982, 485–514) and 1936, 909–910.
68 Gerstinger 1943–1947 (cf. D'Ippolito 1964, 27 n. 1).
69 Vian 1976, XX–XXII.
70 Lasky 1978, 376.

turn, Thierry Duc considers the encomium-format the unifying principle of the poem.[71] Indeed, it is precisely in the programmatic proem that the *Dionysiaca* is introduced as ποικίλος ὕμνος (*Dion.* 1.15), which

> mi sembra convalidare l'idea che Nonno abbia voluto rappresentare nelle *Dionisiache* un gigantesco inno, dedicato a narrare le vicende di un dio τρίγονος (Zagreo, Dioniso, Iacco) che attraverso varie prove finisce per ascendere all'Olimpo, dove siede insieme con Zeus e con Apollo, e che per questo, da poeta dotto, lo abbia rigorosamente strutturato secondo lo schema retorico dell'encomio regale (βασιλικὸς λόγος).[72]

From this general concept of the rhetorical scheme as an overall diegetic plan, there arose various analyses that aimed to verify, from different points of view, the structural coherence of the poem. Discarding the idea of a mosaic composition,[73] linked to the obsolete concept of compositional disorder, my own purely formal analysis (which I defined as "fenomenologia delle strutture superficiali")[74] sees in the poem the confluence of two types of epic narrations equally present in the Alexandrian age, the epyllion, practiced by Callimachus and particularly widespread in Late Antiquity,[75] and the long epic, which nevertheless also shows the influence of the epyllion.[76] This theory was taken up by Agosti,[77] who in addition drew attention to the taste for digression and episodic narration, characteristic not only of Nonnus but generally of Late Antiquity. Paolo Nizzola justly concludes: "il criterio dell'episodicità riposa … su precisi dettami poetici elaborati dall'estetica letteraria di età tardo-antica, e, comunque, non preclude la possibilità di cogliere la coerenza narrativa dell'impianto macrotestuale delle *Dionisiache*."[78] It must therefore be clarified that I did not intend to consider the presence of epyllia at all (which I could also call "brief epic compositions") "nel senso di un agglomerato di episodi cuciti più o meno malamente, o con una voluta disattenzione al quadro generale, ridotto a mera cornice":[79] at the hylomorphic level I have always considered the narrative model of the poem as firmly grounded in the scheme of the encomium. But

71 Duc 1990.
72 D'Ippolito 2011.
73 Keydell 1936, 910.
74 D'Ippolito 1995, 220.
75 See, among others, Baumbach and Bär 2012.
76 D'Ippolito 1964.
77 Agosti 1995.
78 Nizzola 2012, 23.
79 Agosti 2016, 6.

I have also found unity at the deep structural level through an actantial analysis.[80] There are two main models in the *Dionysiaca*. One is closed, so that the message consists in the progressive acquisition by Dionysus (an actant that is at once Subject and Receiver), through the wish of his father Zeus (Sender), of a divine nature (Object: Ὄλυμπος) through various tests of suffering (Helpers: Βάκχων ὅμιλος; Opponents: Ἰνδῶν στρατός, φῦλα Γιγάντων). The other is open, and in it Dionysus (now only the Subject), with the same helpers and opponents, redeems men (Receivers: βροτοί) through the gift of wine (Object: οἶνος λυσίπονος). Another type of analysis, referring to the content, aims to find a type of coherence through identification of centers of thematic organization. Taking a cue from some of my own classifications,[81] David Hernández de la Fuente distinguishes six mythical themes: "el orden contra el caos, ciudades y amores, la hospitalitad de la vid, los enemigos del dios, el deseo y la soberbia, resurrecciones dionisíacas."[82] I myself, alongside the architheme constituted by the encomium of Dionysus, have shown a second architheme, Eros, in line with the γυναιμανής protagonist:[83] the concentration in the *Dionysiaca* of so many themes and motifs concerning love, dominated by a polymorphic Eros, is something unique in the whole of Greek literature.

But recognition of the *Dionysiaca* should really begin with an appreciation of its particular poetics, which originated in a world that is in many respects opposed to the classical one, to which in my monograph I gave the label "Baroque." Fundamental for understanding Nonnus' poetics are two programmatic proems.[84] In the first one (*Dion.* 1.1–45) Nonnus formulates the principle of ποικιλία, embodied in the multiform Proteus. Various levels of ποικιλία can be distinguished, but the most evident consists of a mixture of genres, a phenomenon rooted in the Alexandrian age. Thus, the *Dionysiaca* puts together two traditional genres, the war epic and the romantic epic, going back to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, which are the foundation of all Greek literature, and with which Nonnus expressly competes;[85] it also contains examples of all other genres. Indeed, we can recognize in the poem a didactic epic,[86] an epic pas-

80 D'Ippolito 1982.
81 D'Ippolito 1964.
82 Hernández de la Fuente 2008, 63–205.
83 D'Ippolito 2013.
84 Hernández de la Fuente 2008, 40–57; Bannert 2008; Accorinti 2009; Gigli Piccardi 2016.
85 Cf. D'Ippolito 1964, 37–41; Vian 1991, 5–18 (= Vian 2005, 469–482); Hopkinson 1994b, 9–42.
86 There are, for instance, a thousand or so lines on astrological themes distributed throughout the poem, but also some smaller passages, like twenty-six lines in 2.482–507 on the origin of lightning.

toral poem,[87] an allegorical epic,[88] a satirical one,[89] an aetiological one,[90] an epigrammatic one,[91] a mimic one,[92] and a hymnic one.[93] In the second proem (*Dion.* 25.1–30, cf. 264–270), Nonnus makes a significant declaration of agonal poetics: the poet will sing, according to the Iliadic model, only about the last year of the war (25.8–9), but further on (25.27) he will declare that he wants to compete with both the ancient poets and the younger ones (νέοισι καὶ ἀρχεγόνοισιν ἐρίζων) and apply the rhetorical devices of *synkrisis* in the narration of the deeds of his hero (25.28–30).

Regarding the meaning, aims, and target audience of this poem, once we have abandoned the theory that Nonnus composed the *Dionysiaca* before converting to Christianity, the genesis of the poem can be explained in three ways. The first theory is purely abstract. According to it, the poem constitutes "una gigantesca, intenzionale demolizione ironica della religione pagana, condotta con l'arma della parodia e dell'umorismo raffinato da parte di un cristiano impegnato" (a theory presented but not accepted by Pier Franco Beatrice).[94] The theory clearly prevailing today is that the poem is a document of pagan-Christian syncretism of deeply Christianized Egypt. Considering that the Nonnian poem has an indisputable pagan inspiration, but shows no signs of any anti-Christian polemic, the author's paganism is rather an aesthetic attitude aiming to preserve the richness of the cultural heritage.[95] As already mentioned, the basic spirit is Christian, but at the same time, it does not repudiate "pagan" values. A cross-reading of both works by Nonnus, of which we have

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87 For example, 15.398–419, twenty-two lines of lament on the shepherd Hymnus with a refrain: 4× βούτης καλὸς ὄλωλε, καλὴ δέ μιν ἔκτανε κούρη. Cf. Harries 1994; Lasek 2016, 406–412.

88 On the subject, for example, of the *Typhonia* (1.140–2.712), where the hundred-headed Typhon represents the principle of Chaos.

89 For example, 1.323–342, twenty lines that include a sarcastic monologue by Hera addressed to Zeus.

90 For example, 1.354–361, eight lines on the origin of the lineage of Europa and on the catasterism of the nuptial Bull, or 5.269–279, eleven lines on the Etesian winds.

91 Collart 1913; Lasek 2016, 412–416.

92 Lind 1935–1936.

93 Dilthey 1872, 385–386; Braun 1915; D'Ippolito 2011; Lasek 2016, 416–420.

94 Beatrice 2007, 3531.

95 Chuvin 1986, 2006. Bowersock says clearly: "wherever purely classical Greek paganism turns up in literature or art (Apollo, Dionysos, Herakles, Zeus, and so on), it appears to be an elegant or erudite pleasure of Christians" (1996, 266). Haas 2004 investigates the retention of pagan religion in Late Antique Alexandria and concludes that, whereas Egyptian beliefs survived, Hellenism, at least as it is applied to religious practices by polytheists, is a fiction perpetrated by intellectuals. Lately Chuvin has studied even the emergence of Christian theology in the *Dionysiaca* (2014, 12–18).

shown several examples above, correctly supported by Accorinti as a particularly valuable approach to the poet,[96] offers the best proof of the complex dialogue between the Christian and classical traditions.

On this basis a third, new theory has been proposed. This theory, for which I do not hide my liking, was put forward and upheld by Livrea.[97] It considers the poem on Dionysus, together with the *Paraphrase*, as originating from a unitary theological project serving to show the pre-Christian presence of a savior god. Nonnus might have chosen to collect all the myths referring to Dionysiac soteriology, one of the noblest and most elevated in the pagan world, inspired by a concept expressed in a text that was contemporaneous of him, *Theosophia Tubingensis*, from the second half of the fifth century, which certainly reflects an idea that was not isolated: οὐ δεῖ ἀποβάλλειν τὰς τῶν σοφῶν ἀνδρῶν Ἑλλήνων περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ μαρτυρίας … Ὥστε ὅστις ἀθετεῖ τὰς τοιαύτας μαρτυρίας, ἀθετεῖ καὶ τὸν θεὸν [ἐπὶ] ταύτας κινήσαντα (*Prooem.* 2: "We must not refuse the testimonies of the wise Hellenes on the divinity … Anyone who refuses such testimonies also refuses the God that produces them"[98]). In this new perspective, opened up and upheld by Livrea, the underlying reason for the composition of the *Dionysiaca* becomes clearer.

5 Chronology and Identity of Nonnus

On the absolute chronology of Nonnus, the conclusions in the item "Nonnus 15" by Keydell are still valid, according to which the poet must have lived between 400 and 470.[99] There has been, however, a major, even definitive, change in the relative chronology of the two works. The idea of the precedence of the *Dionysiaca* and of the conversion of the author, who consequently was believed to have left the poem unfinished, has been abandoned; the predominant view today is that Nonnus was Christian from birth. In the reconstruction by Livrea,[100] some aspects of which are unexceptionable, while others are criticized, but in my opinion, it is a generally convincing work, the poet is identified with the Bishop of Edessa.

Here is how Livrea reconstructs Nonnus' identity: Nonnus was born in Panopolis, in upper Egypt, around 400 in a Christian family probably of Syrian

96 Accorinti 2015.
97 Livrea 2000, 71–76.
98 Beatrice 2001, 7.
99 Keydell 1936.
100 Livrea 2000, 39–76.

origin, as may be inferred from the name; he would have studied in Alexandria[101] and at the law school in Berytus, in Syria; in 431, perhaps already a monk, he would have participated in the Council of Ephesus, in the retinue of Cyril of Alexandria; from 431 to 439 he would have sojourned at the Pacomian monastery of Tabennisi, in upper Egypt, often going away to visit Alexandria and the Patriarchate; from 449 to 451 he was the Bishop of Edessa, a metropolitan center in the Roman province of the Osroene in the Patriarchate of Antioch; from 451 to 457 he was the Bishop of Heliopolis; in the years 457–471 he was again the Bishop of Edessa until his death. As for the composition of the two works, Livrea sees it as more or less simultaneous, beginning from 431, and sets their publication between 445 and 451. Bearing in mind the poems' long gestation, it is possible that they were partially diffused through public recitations: certainly the *Dionysiaca*, but perhaps also the *Paraphrase*; this would fit in with the digressive structure of the former poem and the propensity for aurality.[102] As a matter of fact, I think that poets have always had a preference for the enjoyment of poetry through oral performance.

In this reconstruction, the point most criticized is the identification of the poet with the bishop.[103] Livrea defends his position by showing how unlikely it is that two separate people existed at exactly the same time, both named Nonnus, one of whom, the Bishop of Edessa, defended the doctrinal position of Cyril at the 431 Council of Ephesus, and the other, the poet-theologian of Panopolis, wrote a paraphrase of John in terms very appropriate to Cyril.[104] Other essential facts include: the Syriac character of the *Vorlage* of John on which Nonnus based his work, the overwhelming preponderance of Syriac and Asia Minor mythology in the *Dionysiaca*, the complete agreement between the theological affirmations of Nonnus, the historical bishop, and the theological and exegetic point of view of the *Paraphrase*. I would add that, according to studies by Ewa Wipszycka on ecclesiastical institutions in Late Antique Egypt,[105] candidates for bishops were chosen mostly from among monks from wealthy families, who had received a good education.

101 On Alexandria as a very important center of rhetorical studies in Late Antiquity, see Fournet 2007.

102 Cf. Agosti 2004, 16–17; 2006; 2016, 11–13; Tissoni 2008, 78–79.

103 Cameron 2000 and 2016, 81–90 and 304–307 (actually, his objections are resumed in this now outdated question: "Who can believe that a serving bishop devoted his spare time to writing the *Dionysiaca*?" Cameron 2016, 307). Even Accorinti 2016b remains unconvinced by Livrea's reconstruction, as is already evident from the title of his article on the identity of Nonnus, "An Obscure Biography and a Controversial Figure."

104 Livrea 2003.

105 Wipszycka 1997, 248.

6 The Scholiast of Gregory Nazianzen

At this point Nonnus' recognized interest in mythology forces us to consider the identification of the poet with the homonymous abbot, the author of mythological *scholia* on four discourses (4, 5, 39, and 43) by Gregory of Nazianzus. While *RE* had a separate item for him (Nonnos 14),[106] the *RAC* devoted a paragraph to him in the article "Nonnos von Panopolis."[107] Accorinti pointed out certain analogies between the poet and the scholiast;[108] it also seems, as indicated above, that Nonnus' cultural operation can be linked to the poetry of Gregory, which Nonnus constantly bore in mind.[109] Consequently, we can deem it very probable that this third work is attributable to the Panopolite.[110]

7 Sources and Intertextuality

On Nonnus' sources, considered as borrowings from other authors or from mythographic manuals, I do not wish to say anything here. Limiting myself to the *Dionysiaca*, I will deal with two problems of varied complexity and caliber that I have worked on previously: the first concerns the influences of contemporary reality on the poem; the other, intertextual relations, which are profuse, multifarious, and complex, and here I will focus in particular on the problem of Nonnus' use of Latin poetry.

In the introduction to the Budé edition, Vian concludes the section on *précurseurs et sources* by mentioning contemporary influences.[111] He observes that the poet does not avoid anachronisms: his buildings show domes and mosaics; his heroes love luxurious carpets, rare fabrics, and precious stones; between gods and mortals, the ceremonials of the imperial court are in force; and there are allusions to contemporary shows, such as dramatic performances with masks, table music, pantomimes, and hydromimes. The latter term is used without the quotation marks that I used when I coined it.[112] The frequency of aquatic scenes and some descriptive details, like the recurrent use of the epithet ἡμιφανής, attributed to someone in water, but above all, the introduction

106 Ensslin 1936.
107 Accorinti 2013, 1111.
108 Accorinti 1990.
109 D'Ippolito 1994.
110 Beatrice 2007, 3532.
111 Vian 1976, XLI–L.
112 D'Ippolito 1962a.

by Nonnus' contemporary, Dracontius, of aquatic motifs in myths that previously did not have them, and also the explicit attention of both poets to the mute art of the pantomimist (Drac. *Medea* 16–19; Nonn. *Dion.* 19.198–262 and elsewhere) made me think about the influence of shows in fashion during that period, which I called hydromimes, condemned by the Church (cf. Chrys. *Hom. in Mt.* 6–7) as a pretext for lascivious exhibitions.

Recently, however, Laura Miguélez-Cavero, in a well-documented article, rightly insists on the insufficiency of information on such shows, but without denying their existence.[113] On water as an important element in Dionysiac symbolism, we can certainly agree with the scholar, but to think that aquatic shows, which surely existed, could not have influenced Nonnus, seems unreasonable to me. On the other hand, what should we say of Dracontius, who, having expressly declared he was inspired by the mute art of the pantomimist,[114] has Jason swim to the land of the Colchidians and Cupid emerge from the bottom of the sea to touch Medea's soul (Drac. *Medea* 36–49 and 86–99)? I confess that I find it difficult to cancel from my dictionary a term that I had grown fond of and which continues to be welcomed by critics.[115]

8 Use of Latin Poets

One unresolved issue that, in my opinion, can move us toward a solution is that of Nonnus' use of Latin poetry, and particularly of the great poetry of Vergil and Ovid. What drove me to return to this issue, which I began studying over fifty years ago, was the beginning of an excellent recent article by Michael Paschalis, "Ovidian Metamorphosis and Nonnian *poikilon eidos*":

> The issue of Nonnus' familiarity with and use of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as a literary source has attracted and continues to attract a lot of scholarly attention. In recent years the argument in favour of Ovidian influence on Nonnus has weakened considerably. Nonnus had at his disposal an enormous amount of Greek literature now lost to us and hence, as Peter Knox has pointed out (1988, 551), "it is *a priori* improbable that a Panopolitan

113 Miguélez-Cavero 2011.

114 Drac. *Medea* 16–19 *Nos illa canemus, / quae solet in lepido Polyhymnia docta theatro / muta loqui.*

115 Among the many supporters of this source of inspiration, we can include recently Chuvin 2016, 123 and Kröll 2016, 37 and 116 n. 51; according to the latter, the episode of Ampelos reflects the influence of hydromimes.

> would use a Latin poem as his source for Greek mythology, when there were so many works available in his native tongue." Nonnus' familiarity with the *Metamorphoses* is not improbable but it is an entirely different thing to assume that he used Ovid's epic as a source text. The existence of a common source for Ovid and Nonnus is commonly suggested as an alternative to Nonnus' dependence on Ovid but the situation may turn out to be more complex.[116]

This is an idea that I fully share. The fact is, in a note the scholar quotes Braune and myself as promoters of a dependence of Nonnus on Ovid, but this is not wholly accurate.[117] Neither in my 1964 monograph nor in the long article I published some years ago[118] did I ever speak of a "dependence" of Nonnus on Ovid or Vergil, considered as his sources: on the contrary, I spoke of his knowledge of them and of single intertextual references.

If I now return to a broader examination of the problem, it is above all because it seems to me that, though there is no late Greek poet in whom, to a more or less extensive and certain degree, relations are not found with Latin poets (I think here above all about Quintus of Smyrna and Triphiodorus[119]), opposition to this view still survives. It is true that among the reviewers of my *Studi Nonniani* I have found almost exclusively consent.[120] However, to quote the most conspicuous case, the respective authors of the four volumes of the first Italian edition of Nonnus' poem do not appear very inclined to accept a Latin influence for Nonnus.[121] Among scholars who have continued to find direct intertextual relationships between Nonnus and Ovid I would mention James Diggle and his views on the episode of Phaethon.[122] The influence of Latin poets is admitted in some monographs on Nonnus, for instance, by Barbara Abel-Willmanns and Henryk Wójtowicz.[123]

116 Paschalis 2014, 97.
117 Braune 1935; D'Ippolito 1964.
118 D'Ippolito 2007.
119 Cf., among others, D'Ippolito 1988 and 1989.
120 I will mention Grimal 1964; Vian 1964; Henry 1965; Hunger 1965; Viarre 1965; Chantraine 1966; Dostálová 1966; Keydell 1966 (= Keydell 1982, 551–555).
121 Gigli Piccardi 2003; Gonnelli 2003; Agosti 2004; Accorinti 2004.
122 Diggle 1970, 180–200 ("Appendix A: Ovid and Nonnus").
123 Abel-Willmanns 1977, 59–64; Wójtowicz 1980, 61–64. Shorrock 2001, 110, remains skeptical "in spite of the striking similarities which do exist between the two epics" (Nonnus and Ovid). Recently Gärtner 2013, from a methodological and general point of view, has addressed the question of the Latin influence on the Late Antique Greek poets and, while not opposed to admitting a knowledge of Latin and of Latin poets, prudently refrains from taking a clear position, which in my opinion can only be arrived at through textual comparisons.

Before analyzing the intertextual data that link Nonnus to Vergil and Ovid, let us start by asking ourselves once again what relations he had with the Roman world. It is true that beginning from the third or fourth century one finds abundant evidence of in-depth study of the Latin language and literature in schools in Egypt.[124] Indeed, most Latin literary papyri date from this period:[125] above all, nineteen Vergilian papyri (many of which show a Greek translation alongside the Latin text, and the nineteenth is even a retroversion), but Cicero too is well represented, as are poets of the imperial age like Lucan and Juvenal. Recently, a fragment of Seneca's *Medea* was also found in a fourth-century papyrus.[126] No Ovidian papyri have been found thus far, perhaps because the subject of the *Metamorphoses* was not deemed suitable for schools; but it cannot be thought that the poet was also ignored by scholars.

Consequently, we can infer that in Late Antique Egypt it was typical for a cultured poet like Nonnus to read Latin authors, above all Vergil, whose works, as the papyri show, were widespread in the Greek world and were studied and translated in schools.[127] After all, Claudian, who first wrote poetry in Greek and then in Latin, came from Egypt.

Even from the content of the *Dionysiaca* it can be presumed that Nonnus read at least Vergil, because the latter was the bard of Rome par excellence, and Rome is very much present in the poem: the Latin culture of the poet is clearly pointed to by the great importance of Roman traits in his work, particularly the admiration for and explicit praise of the Roman Empire (cf. above all *Dion.* 41.389–398, where Harmonia prophesies the advent of a new era of peace and justice under the Roman Empire) and the great role assigned to a city in which he almost certainly sojourned and studied, namely Berytus, with its famous law school. A full three books (41–43) are devoted to this city, and its detailed and elaborated description (41.14–49) indicates a personal experience.[128]

In his important article, previously mentioned, in which he identifies Nonnus of Panopolis with Nonnus of Edessa, the bishop,[129] Livrea touches incidentally but resolutely on the issue of the relationship between Nonnus' poem and Latin texts. He affirms that Nonnus "se avesse saputo il latino, non avrebbe mai definito l'evangelico σουδάριον un prestito 'siro' "[130] in *Paraphrase* 11.173 and

124 Cf. Moore 1924; Bagnall 1993, 230–235.
125 Collected in Cavenaile 1958; cf. Schubert 2013.
126 Markus and Schwendner 1997.
127 Cf. D'Ippolito 1985.
128 Cf. Chuvin 1991, 196–204.
129 Livrea 1987, 113–123 (= Livrea 1991, 453–462).
130 Livrea 1987, 106 n. 23 (= Livrea 1991, 446–447 n. 23).

20.30, "due passi in cui *demonstratur eum latinam linguam nescisse*[131] e che avrebbero potuto risparmiarci, se evocati in tempo, il fiume di inutile bibliografia sulla presunta utilizzazione nonniana di modelli latini". Two commentators of the respective books are more cautious. Konstantinos Spanoudakis admits that "It does not immediately follow that N. ignored Latin altogether … although his attribution casts some doubt over his competence in Latin."[132] As Accorinti reminds us,[133] Kuhn finds wholly motivated the qualification as Σύρων στόμα that Nonnus gives to the word σουδάριον "allerdings kommt sūdār oder sūdārā im Syrischen für Schweisstuch oder Kopftuch vor; aber sein Charakter als Fremdwort liegt dort ebenso zutage wie im Griechischen."[134] The admission here of an error raises the doubt that Nonnus simply wanted to underline the fact that the word is not Greek and is present in the Syriac language,[135] while in Egypt it was probably no longer used (the Egyptian papyri attest it until the third century);[136] nevertheless, the consequence that Preller draws from it, followed by Livrea, seems disproportionate to me. It would be sufficient to reflect on how many errors ancients committed regarding the etymologies and history of words. There are countless examples of this. I will only mention that of another bishop, also a philologist, Eustathius of Thessalonica (twelfth century). The latter, "benché dia prova in molte citazioni di conoscere il latino, arriva al punto di far derivare παλάτιον da Παλλάντιον, σελλίον da σέλμα, σέρρα ('sbarra della porta') da σειρά. Perfino le calende vengono fatte … greche e παννίον addirittura viene fatto risalire al dio Pan."[137] To me it seems that Nonnus' "Syrian" σουδάριον, admitting that it is an error is comparable to the case of Eustathius' Greek calends, which does not show that the learned bishop ignored Latin and even less that he did not know Greek well. On the contrary, we must not overlook the fact that in the *Paraphrase* itself the poet expressly quotes two Latin words: in 13.21–22 ὕφασμα, τόπερ φάτο Θυμβριὰς αὐδή / λέντιον (*linteum*); in 19.102 γράμμα, τόπερ καλέουσι Λατινίδι τίτλον ἰωῇ (*titulus*). Let us therefore continue to believe, until the contrary is proved, that the "devoted and enthusiastic pupil"[138] of the Berytus law school and the great admirer of Rome was able to read and understand Latin.

131 Thus already Preller 1918, 111.
132 Spanoudakis 1914c, 303.
133 Accorinti 1996, 145.
134 Kuhn 1906, 94.
135 Cf. Bauer 1963, under σουδάριον.
136 Cf. Preisigke 1925, under σουδάριον.
137 Rotolo 1984, 357, where what is affirmed is documented.
138 Livrea 1987, 107 (= Livrea 1991, 447).

Another obstacle to admitting intertextual relations with Latin poets was clearly expressed by Knox, who made the following observation about the story of Phaethon, dealt with by both Nonnus and Ovid: "It is therefore possible that Nonnus could read Latin, even Latin poetry, but it is unlikely that he could count on an audience that would recognize and admire his dexterous re-handling of Ovidian material."[139] In response to this objection, it can be observed that as a rule the poet aims high and addresses an abstract model reader, who is able to perceive every degree of readerly interpretation and even go beyond Nonnus' own intentions: obviously, there can be different levels of reading, from the most naïve, and these are the majority, to the profoundest and most refined.

The way having been cleared of preliminary obstacles to the thesis of a Latin influence on Nonnus, a comparative examination of the texts will be able, I hope, to offer a convincing solution to this problem.

9 Nonnus and Vergil

The first links between Nonnus and Vergil are found in the few Byzantine scholia to the *Dionysiaca*: a third hand annotates to *Dion.* 37.652 ση[μείωσαι] τάδε καὶ παρὰ βεργιλίῳ (in addition to the note ὁμηρίζει κἀνταῦθα by a second hand) and to 37.729, more decidedly, βεργιλίου ταῦτα.[140] Among modern scholars, Cataudella has argued with conviction but generically that for Nonnus the influence of Vergil was "non solamente di spiriti, ma anche di forme e di esempi."[141] Here I will confine myself to mentioning cases for which, in my opinion, a direct relationship can be hypothesized.

In *Aen.* 3.637 Vergil presents Polyphemus' eye *Phoebeae lampadis instar* ("like the lamp of Phoebus/Sun": cf. Ov. *Met.* 13.853, where in a dialogue close to the passage in the *Aeneid*, Polyphemus himself is compared to the sun, with an *unicus orbis*), while in *Dion.* 28.230–231 Nonnus imagines Σελήνη/Γηγενέος Κύκλωπος ἐναντέλλουσα προσώπῳ. One might think of a Nonnian *imitatio cum variatione*, considering that the two images, the sun and moon, are not found in other ancient texts to connote the eye of the Cyclops. The juxtaposition of Polyphemus and the moon must have been suggested to Nonnus by the use of the adjective κύκλωψ "round" (with a weakened sense of the second part -ωψ "face"), which, if in Empedocles (fr. B 84.8 Diels–Kranz) it is said of the "pupil,"

139 Knox 1988, 551.
140 Keydell 1959, vol. 2, 513.
141 Cataudella 1932, 333.

in Parmenides (fr. B 10.4 Diels–Kranz) it connotes precisely the "moon." But it would also be permissible to believe that Nonnus took the Vergilian *Phoebeae* as "of Phoebe, of the moon," rather than "of Phoebus, of the sun," in line with an ancient exegesis (Servius, ad loc.: *'Phoebeae' … derivatio est vel a Luna, vel a Sole*).

On the madness of Pentheus, compare *Aen.* 4.469–470: *veluti* ***demens videt*** *…* ***Pentheus / et solem geminum et duplicis*** *se ostendere* ***Thebas*** and *Dion.* 46.116 f., 125: **Πενθεύς** / ἠδυμανής … / … καὶ **διδύμους Φαέθοντας ἐδέρκετο** καὶ δύο **Θήβας**. The common intertext is Euripides, *Ba.* 918–919 Καὶ μὴν ὁρᾶν μοι δύο μὲν ἡλίους δοκῶ, / δισσὰς δὲ Θήβας (Pentheus is speaking). But both epics, in speaking of the sun, introduce a less banal adjective than Euripides' δύο, which also means "twin," *geminus* / δίδυμος: in my opinion, this curious detail points to a direct relationship.

In a third case, a reference to Vergil is interwoven with one to Ovid. For the episode of Ampelus' death caused by a bull (*Dion.* 11.56–12.137), one of the models is Ovid's Cyparissus (*Met.* 10.106–142):[142] in particular, the beast being changed, Nonnus kept in mind the detailed description of the deer and Cyparissus' care over it. Moreover, for this passage Ovid took hints from the Vergilian episode of the domestic deer of Rhea Silvia (*Aen.* 7.483–502). This raises an interesting point: while *Dion.* 11.175–178 καὶ **δροσεροῖς** πετάλοισι δέμας **διεκόσμεε** ταύρου, / καὶ **ῥόδα** φοινίσσοντα πέριξ ἐπεδήσατο νώτῳ / καὶ **κρίνα** καὶ **νάρκισσον** ἐπηώρησε μετώπῳ, / αὐχένι πορφύρουσαν ἐπικρεμάσας **ἀνεμώνην** appears like an amplification of *Met.* 10.123 *tu modo texebas* ***varios*** *per cornua* ***flores***, the Ovidian intertext, which is *Aen.* 7.488 ***mollibus*** *intexens* ***ornabat*** *cornua sertis* affords two elements neglected by Ovid, *mollibus* and *ornabat*, which, perfectly rendered by Nonnus with δροσεροῖς and διεκόσμεε, induce one to see a clear direct reference.

We can speak with greater confidence about those episodes in which both Nonnus and Vergil follow a recognized common Greek model, the *Iliad*, while, at the same time, they also present similar elements not referable to it. Typical episodes are those of the *ludi*, above all *Dion.* 37.103–778 (ἆθλα ἐπ' Ὀφέλτῃ) and *Aen.* 5.104–602: the intertext of the two poems is *Il.* 23.257–897. In this case, the sporadically advanced Nonnus-Vergil links are referable to the same intertext—Homer—as in the two places indicated by the scholia, at least at one point breaking away from the model and revealing a direct relationship.

In the boxing match (*Dion.* 37.485–546; *Aen.* 5.362–484; *Il.* 23.653–699), Nonnus changes the pair of prizes in comparison to Homer, who speaks of a mule and a cup (*Il.* 23.654–657). It seems that in choosing the two prizes he took his

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142 D'Ippolito 1964, 141–143.

cue from Vergil: in this connection, the Latin poet has a young bull (*iuvencum*, l. 366; *taurum*, l. 382) as the first prize, and a sword and a helmet (*ensem atque ... galeam*, l. 367) as the consolation prize. Nonnus likewise has a bull (ταῦρον, l. 486) as the first prize, and as the second again an element of a warrior's armor, namely a shield (βοείην, l. 488). On the basis of what has been highlighted,[143] i.e., that Vergil felt and described the meeting as a fight, emphasizing this characteristic of the test through the employment of a series of war terms, it seems to me reasonable to think that the choice of the prizes is to be seen from this perspective, and therefore, that the Latin poet, and no one else, prompted Nonnus to make the change. This seems all the more convincing if we consider that the two boxers, Dares and Entellus, also enjoyed great fame among the Greeks, so much so that there were two statues of them in the Constantinopolitan gymnasium (cf. Christod. *AP* 2.222–227), and therefore Nonnus might have been prompted by this renown to remember the Vergilian episode. But one reference appears decisive. The episode ends on an absolutely Vergilian image: so that Aeneas and the Trojans will understand what death Dares has been spared, Entellus offers them a final test of his strength by smashing a bull's skull. Nonnus, in a different context, imitates precisely the line that describes the bull's death: *Aen.* 5.481 *sternitur* ***exanimisque*** *tremens* ***procumbit humi bos*** ~ *Dion.* 43.46–47 **ἡμιθανὴς** δέ / ὕπτιος αὐτοκύλιστος **ὑπόκλασε ταῦρος ἀρούρῃ**.[144] These analogies only seem explainable through the direct use of Vergil in the *Dionysiaca*, especially if the Greek models are compared in which the image of the mortally wounded bull recurs and which show different expressive solutions: Hom. *Il.* 17.520–522 (at l. 523 it is the warrior, to whom the bull is compared, that falls ὕπτιος) and Apoll. Rh. 1.427–428 (... πεσὼν ἐνερείσατο γαίῃ).

A last comparison was proposed by me more recently while speaking of Sicily in Nonnus.[145] During the organization of the funeral of Opheltes, Phaunus lights a fire by rubbing two stones (37.56–69). While the action in Homer fills a single line (*Il.* 23.177), the Nonnian description has its precedent in the *Aeneid* (1.174–176), and indeed seems like an amplification of it, but with an exchange of protagonists. In Vergil, the fire is lit by Achates, which as a common noun refers to the stone called agate, and hence lent itself to a pun (*Aen.* 1.174: *scintillam excudit Achates*); in Nonnus this role is played by Phaunus, but the name of Achates does not disappear: both are Sicilian leaders (Faunus is also Sicilian for Ovid, *Met.* 13.750) who participate in the chariot race.

143 Monaco 1972², 113–114.
144 The connection is already made in Bezdechi 1941, 12–13.
145 Cf. D'Ippolito 2000, 66–68.

10 Nonnus and Ovid

Moving on to Ovid, the relationships between the *Metamorphoses* and the *Dionysiaca* have long been noticed, but due to the old prejudice that a Greek poet could not have had relations with a Roman, the evident analogies between the two authors were given the double explanation that we have seen applied to relations with Vergil: either both poets used the same or a similar mythographic enchiridion,[146] or, as most have thought, they had common Alexandrian poetic sources.[147]

Others, it is true, admitted that Nonnus read and used Ovid, among them Comte de Marcellus.[148] However, they limited themselves to setting similar passages side by side without considering the problem of connection. The first to develop the thesis of a direct relationship between Nonnus and Ovid was Braune.[149] Having examined four myths common to the *Metamorphoses* and the *Dionysiaca*—those of Phaethon, Cadmus, Actaeon, and Daphne (the latter not developed fully, as in Ovid, but frequently mentioned in the episodes of Nicaea, Chalcomede, Beroe, and Aura)—he concludes that they do not generally derive from common models, since they do not concern the principal traits, which present different versions, but only some details of the *ornatus*, while a common source, prose or poetic, would have determined more marked and substantial analogies with respect to the content. Braune's thesis was accepted by experts on Nonnus and Ovid like Keydell and Lenz.[150] Bezdechi also showed that Nonnus used *Ars amatoria*,[151] while further proof of his knowledge of Latin poets was provided by Braune,[152] as well as by Haidacher and Dostálová-Jeništová.[153]

Nevertheless, the problem could not have been considered settled. Indeed, upon its appearance, Braune's essay found an authoritative opponent in Paul Maas, for whom a prejudicial reason would make it impossible to adhere to his thesis: "Einfluß lateinischer Dichtung auf griechische ist, soviel ich weiß, für die Zeit vor dem XIII. Jahrh. nirgends erwiesen … Lateinisches nicht zu berücksichtigen war für den griechischen Dichter und für seine Leser ein viel-

146 Vollgraff 1901, 45–61 ("De fabula Phaethontis"), 61–74 ("De Europae et Cadmi fabula"); Kiensle 1903, 15–34.

147 Maass 1889; Wilhelm 1906, 99–104; Castiglioni 1907, 81–82, 117–311.

148 Marcellus 1856, XVIII and *passim* in the notes.

149 Braune 1935.

150 Keydell 1935 (= Keydell 1982, 557–565); Lenz 1937.

151 Bezdechi 1941.

152 Braune 1948.

153 Haidacher 1949, 55–63; Dostálová-Jeništová 1957b.

leicht unausgesprochenes, aber jedenfalls bindendes Gesetz."[154] Therefore, it was time to go back to the problem of the relationship between Nonnus and the Latin poets in a sphere that was as complete as possible: this is what I have tried to do, first facing the relationship with Ovid,[155] and subsequently the relationship with Vergil.[156] Thus it seemed appropriate to me, in my monograph on the *Dionysiaca*, to give ample space to an examination of Ovidian influences, not limited to the four episodes considered by Braune.[157] At the same time, I made an attempt to see whether other Ovidian works, apart from the *Metamorphoses* and the *Ars Amatoria*, had left traces in the poem: the search was positive for the *Heroides*.

I will not discuss all the parallels here. These concern the treatment of themes present in the Nonnian poem: the παρθένοι φυγόδεμνοι (Nicaea, Aura, Chalcomede, Beroe), the abandoned lover (Ariadne), *pueri dilecti superis* (Ampelus), the hospitality theme (Brongus, Erigone; it also appears in the Cadmeid and in the Staphylus episode), the punished ἀσέβεια (Pentheus, Actaeon), the saga of Cadmus (Europa, Harmonia), Hera's anger (Zagreus, Semele, Ino), and Phaethon.[158] It is significant that in each of these elaborations, which cover a large part of the poem, it has been possible to trace, in a clear-cut way, the presence of Ovid. Supposing constant mediation would mean greatly diminishing the inventive imagination of the Latin poet. Here I will limit my examination to the four narrations concerning bashful virgins, and, because they are neglected by Braune's monograph,[159] to the episodes of Pentheus, a wicked man punished, and Semele, the victim of Hera's anger.

The four stories of Nicaea, Aura, Chalcomede, and Beroe present, especially the first two, deep analogies in the single motifs, in the compositional technique, and in the details of the expression. Most such intratextual recurrences originate from the analogy of the subject. The four protagonists are virgin huntresses, whose principal characteristic is stubborn reluctance in love, with which the vehement passion of their suitors is contrasted. These stories are unlikely to have been dealt with in poetry earlier: in dressing them out in poetry, Nonnus had as his model analogous legends that enjoyed poetic fortune.

154 Maas 1935, 385.
155 D'Ippolito 1964: the problem constitutes one of the leitmotifs of the monograph.
156 D'Ippolito 1987a, 1991.
157 D'Ippolito 1964.
158 D'Ippolito 1964, 86–270.
159 Braune 1935.

Braune first pointed out that in the episodes of Nicaea, Chalcomede, and Aura the Ovidian elaboration of the story of Apollo and Daphne was exploited.[160] Braune's reasoning is correct, but incomplete: in reality Nonnus took into account (both in these three episodes and also in the story of Beroe) not only the Ovidian episode of Apollo and Daphne, but all the principal narrations of bashful huntresses in the *Metamorphoses*. Nonnus' *usus* of quoting, often in series, myths parallel to the ones dealt with, on the one side takes us to the scholastic manuals, which collected various mythical figures in categories, while on the other, especially for references often repeated or developed in several lines, it can prove to be an intertextual clue:[161] just behind the quotation of these parallel myths Nonnus' poetic models can be hidden. And the comparisons I am going to make will show that the poet knew at least the Ovidian versions.

Here I will dwell on the most significant comparisons, starting from the Ovidian story of Apollo and Daphne (*Met.* 1.498–532), almost every line of which is taken up by Nonnus.

The first common motif is appreciation of the features of the beloved: cf. *Met.* 1.498–501 ~ *Dion.* 15.218–219, 236–239 (Hymnus and Nicaea). Notice how the two poets follow the same order in quoting the parts of the body: eyes, fingers, hands, and arms.

The description of the nymph running faster than the wind is analogous. *Met.* 1.502–503: ***fugit ocior aura** / **illa levi*** ~ *Dion.* 34.305–306 (Morrheus and Chalcomede): ἡ δὲ **φυγοῦσα** / ἠερίαις **ταχύγουνος** ἐπέτρεχε σύνδρομος **αὔραις**. We are taken back to these two lines, also with verbal analogies, by the precise reference to Daphne in 33.211: πῶς ποτε Φοῖβον **ἔφευγε**, Βορηίδι σύνδρομος **αὔρῃ**.

There is the same prayer to the beloved to cease her run. *Met.* 1.504: ***nympha**, precor, Penei, **mane**!* ~ *Dion.* 16.145 (Dionysus and Nicaea): **μένε, παρθένε**, Βάκχον ἀκοίτην.

Analogies are found in the vain attempt to reassure the beloved on the part of the suitor, who declares he is not an enemy and moderates his speed. *Met.* 1.504[b]: ***non** insequor **hostis*** ~ *Dion.* 34.319 (Morrheus and Chalcomede): **δήιος οὐ** γενόμην, μὴ δείδιθι. *Met.* 1.511: ***moderatius** insequar **ipse*** ~ *Dion.* 34.310: **φειδομένοις** δὲ πόδεσσιν **ἑκούσιος** ἔτρεχε Μορρεύς.

In several places Nonnus includes the Ovidian motif of the wind that lifts the dress of the beloved one as she runs and makes her hair move. *Met.* 1.527–530: ***nudabant corpora venti,** / obviaque adversas **vibrabant flamina vestes,** /*

160 Braune 1935, 38–41.

161 Cf. Castiglioni 1932, 328 n. 1.

et ***levis inpulsos retro*** *dabat* ***aura*** *capillos, /****auctaque forma*** *fuga est ~ Dion.* 15.223–224 (Hymnus and Nicaea): **πέπλον** ὅλον **κόλπωσεν** ἐς ἠέρα **κοῦφος ἀήτης** / **καὶ χροὸς** ἤνθεε **κάλλος**. 230: βότρυν ὀπισθοπόροιο **κόμης** ἐλέλιζεν **ἀήτης** / κουφίζων ἑκάτερθεν, **ἀειρομένων** δὲ **κομάων** / λευκοφαὴς σελάγιζε μέσος γυμνούμενος αὐχήν. 250–252: μᾶλλον ἀεὶ μιμνήσκετο **πέπλου** / ὁππότε μιν **δονέων** καὶ ἐς ὀμφαλὸν ἄχρις **ἀείρων** / γυμνώσας **χροὸς** ἄνθος ἀνηκόντιζεν **ἀήτης**. 34.308–309 (Morrheus and Chalcomede): **πλοχμοὺς** βοτρυόεντας ἀνερρίπιζον **ἀῆται** / αὐχένα γυμνώσαντες. 35.106–107: τῆς δὲ διωκομένης **ἀνεκούφισε πέπλον ἀήτης**· / θέλγετο δ' εἰσέτι μᾶλλον ἀνείμονι **κάλλεϊ μορφῆς**. 48.485–486 (Dionysus and Aura): Κυπριδίοις ἀνέμοισιν **ἀειρομένοιο χιτῶνος** / μηρὸν ὀπιπεύων θηλύνετο Βάκχος ἀλήτης.[162]

Like Apollo, Hymnus too follows the footsteps of the beloved. *Met.* 1.532: *admisso* ***sequitur*** *vestigia passu ~ Dion.* 15.233: **ὁμάρτεε** πολλάκι κούρῃ.

From the Ovidian episode of Scylla and her ill-omened passion for Minos, there is taken up the motif of the vain desire to become a tool in the hands of the beloved: in Nonnus, the object of love is always a woman. *Met.* 8.36–37 (Scylla speaks): ***felix iaculum, quod tangeret*** *ille, / quaeque* ***manu*** *premeret,* ***felicia*** *frena vocabat ~ Dion.* 15.259–260, 264–266 (Hymnus speaks): αἴθε **βέλος** γενόμην θηροκτόνον, ὄφρα με γυμναῖς / **χερσὶν** ἐλαφρίζειεν· … / παρθένε, κουφίζεις βέλος **ὄλβιον**· ὑμέτεροι δέ / Ὕμνου μηλονόμοιο **μακάρτεροί** εἰσιν ὀιστοί, / **ὅττι τεῶν** ψαύουσιν ἐρωτοτόκων **παλαμάων**. It is true that the erotic motif of the envy felt toward objects, animals, and flowers close to the beloved is very ancient and widespread (beginning from *Carmina convivialia* 17 and 18 Page, to Theocritus 3.12–13, to various epigrams, *AP* 5.83 and 84, 12.142, 15.35, to Longus 1.14.3, to Ovid himself, *Am.* 2.15.9–17), but in no place do we find *felix iaculum* / βέλος ὄλβιον.

The Ovidian episode of Pentheus (*Met.* 3.511–733) follows the lines of Euripides' *Bacchae* (there are a few precise verbal echoes: Eur. *Ba.* 253 ~ Nonn. *Dion.* 45.67, *Ba.* 352 ~ *Dion.* 45.220, *Ba.* 918–919 ~ *Dion.* 46.125, *Ba.* 1065 ~ *Dion.* 46.153), but introduces an ample digression in the middle on the myth of the Tyrrhenian pirates turned by Bacchus into dolphins (*Met.* 3.577–700), an incident of which in Euripides' play there is no indication. The presence of the same digression in Nonnus (*Dion.* 45.119–168) cannot be a chance one: it is particularly significant that, although the two poets' stories are told by different characters (in Nonnus by Teiresias, in Ovid by the imprisoned Acoetes), the purpose is identical: to admonish Pentheus and induce him to bow to the god. The analogous presence of the digression in both poets, neglected by Braune

162 The detail of hair moved by the wind is found again in other passages: 7.260–262 (Semele), 10.181–187 (Ampelus), 16.15–18 (Nicaea).

and first introduced by Keydell as new proof of the dependence of Nonnus on Ovid,[163] becomes even more convincing if supported by other arguments.

Since coincidence is to be excluded, in order to show the connection, it would be necessary to verify that the insertion of the fable of the Tyrrhenians in the myth of Pentheus is an invention of the Latin poet. The sources of the Ovidian episode have been indicated in Euripides' *Bacchae* and, for the final part, in Idyll 26 of Theocritus.[164] But Ovid certainly does not follow Euripides as meticulously as Nonnus, and many features cannot be explained solely through the tragic source text or hints referable to Theocritus. It has plausibly been supposed that Ovid also depends on the *Pentheus* of Pacuvius:[165] in particular, the feature of this almost unknown play must have been the capture of Acoetes, and not of Bacchus himself, by Pentheus' *satellites*.[166] Now, the testimony of Servius (*ad Aen.* 4.469), on which attempts at reconstruction of the Latin tragedy are essentially founded, does indeed speak of Acoetes, but makes no mention of the story of the Tyrrhenian pirates. Hence it was almost certainly Ovid who put it in the mouth of the new character. And we can easily make sense of the cause and origin of the digression. Ovid, in books 2–4 of *Metamorphoses*, reviews the Theban fables according to the succession of the mythographic manuals:[167] this traditional succession included the myth of Pentheus, which therefore was not to be neglected. But how could he adapt to his poem a myth without a metamorphosis? The only way was to insert one: and Ovid did this by introducing in the main story a digression that exceeds it in extension. In conclusion, it cannot be doubted that the idea of introducing the metamorphosis of the Tyrrhenians in the Pentheus story originates from Ovid. Nonnus included it and, in line with his taste for competing by amplifying, immediately added a second story, that of the giant Alpos, of which elsewhere we have no indications.

Even if within the same story there were no contacts between the two poets, this would not provide an argument against their direct relationship; more than one similarity confirms our thesis. In general, here it can be said that Nonnus reproduces, greatly abridged, the content of the *Homeric Hymn to Dionysus* (7);[168] and regarding Ovid, comparisons show the remarkable influence of the

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163 Keydell 1935, 603 (= Keydell 1982, 563).
164 Cf. Lafaye 1904, 144–146.
165 Kiensle 1903, 23–25; subsequently this was upheld with good arguments by D'Anna 1959, 220–226.
166 Cf. D'Anna 1959, 224.
167 Cf. Kiensle 1903, 15–23.
168 Cf. Keydell 1935, 604 (= Keydell 1982, 564).

same Homeric hymn.[169] In such a context, one particularly dependent on the hymn, it is important to note some features common only to the Ovidian text and to that of Nonnus. Specifically, the Homeric hymn speaks to us of the θαύματα ἔργα of Bacchus, mentioning the plants that prodigiously rise on the ship, and does not fail to notice immediately afterwards the amazement (τάφος, l. 37) that such miracles arouse in the sailors. Ovid starts from Homer, but goes further; and Nonnus follows him: the plants prodigiously born are followed by the appearance of various beasts (Ov. *Met.* 3.668–669 ~ Nonn. *Dion.* 45.149–151: Ovid mentions tigers, lynxes, and panthers, Nonnus none of these three species, but rather bulls and lions). The discordance of the details in itself weakens the hypothesis of a common source, but shows, on the other hand, that Nonnus, by taking the idea of amplification from the Latin text, tried to differentiate himself, varying the examples; at the sight of these prodigies, the sailors are seized by terror and even go mad. *Met.* 3.670–671: ***exsiluere** viri, sive hoc **insania** fecit / sive **timor*** ~ *Dion.* 45.152–153: **ἐβακχεύοντο** δὲ **λύσσῃ** / εἰς **φόβον** οἰστρηθέντες. It is to be noticed that Ovid and Nonnus express the three concepts of nervousness, folly, and fear in identical order, with a verb and two nouns connected to it by a relationship of causality.

We find another significant similarity with Ovid in a mention of the story in the preceding book. Mene promises to help Bacchus and remembers various examples of ἀσεβεῖς punished by the god: among others, the Tyrrhenians, whose metamorphosis is described in a few lines (44.240–249). It seems that the final mention of the frolicsome jumps of the dolphins, unknown to the Homeric hymn, could only have been suggested to Nonnus by the Ovidian model. *Met.* 3.685: *inque chori **ludunt** speciem* ~ *Dion.* 44.248: εἰσέτι **κωμάζουσι** καὶ ἐν ῥοθίοις Διονύσῳ.

Already in the *Iliad*, the theme of Hera βαρύμηνις, to become ζηλομανής in later literature following the connection between her usual rages and the repeated infidelities of her consort, became widespread, especially in legends referring to the cycles of Heracles and Dionysus, since both were enemies of Hera's children and were fathered by rivals of hers. The resentful jealousy of Zeus' bride and sister therefore has a large role in the *Dionysiaca* and constitutes a theme developed in three episodes: those of Zagreus (5.563–7.109), Semele (7.110–8.418), and Ino and Athamas (9.132–10.138). The theme is found in many legends narrated in the *Metamorphoses*: indeed, no fewer than two of the three Nonnian episodes, those of Semele and lno, also form the subject of just as many episodes in the Latin poem (*Met.* 3.253–315; 4.416–562). Once

169 Kiensle 1903, 25–27.

more, the numerous similarities between the two poets must be linked, above all, to a direct knowledge of Ovid on Nonnus' part. Here I will mention just one.

Zeus tries to attenuate the sacrifice of Semele by holding up lightning κατηφέι χειρί (*Dion.* 8.371), as in Ovid *qua tamen usque potest, vires sibi demere temptat* (*Met.* 3.302). And there is more. The Latin poet continues: *est aliud* ***levius fulmen****, cui dextra Cyclopum / saevitiae flammaeque minus, minus addidit irae: / tela secunda vocant superi* (3.305–307). He arms himself with this second smaller stroke of lightning, not with the one that struck down Typhoeus, which has *nimium feritatis* (3.304). So, if we are to believe Rudolph Ehwald, who considers the detail "wahrscheinlich Erfindung des Ovid,"[170] then here we would have the absolute certainty that Nonnus drew directly on the Latin poet. This consideration finds potential confirmation in a passage in Seneca (*Nat. quaest.* 2.44.1), which quotes precisely the Ovidian lines in question: *In hoc quoque tam imperiti non fuerunt ut Iovem existimarent tela mutare. Poeticam istud licentiam decet*; and there follow the lines *Met.* 3.305–307. It is now permissible to think that Seneca would not have spoken of *poetica licentia* while speaking of the curious mythical detail if he had not deemed it the fruit of Ovid's imagination.

Indeed, in two other passages Nonnus mentions this detail. In the first passage, which is less clear, reference is made to a μειλίχιον σπινθῆρα γαληναίοιο κεραυνοῦ (8.350). The second passage, in which there is a more explicit indication, does not belong to our episode, but is in book 10. Dionysus, stricken with love for Ampelus, addresses a heartfelt speech to his father Zeus (10.290–325), in which he confesses he does not desire from the king of the gods the attributes that Zagreus received, that is to say, lightning, thunder, and rain. He would be satisfied to brandish the *small* lightning of Semele, but the lightning that killed his mother cannot please him: his only desire is therefore to have young Ampelus all for himself. Here is the line (10.305) that interests us more than any other: καλὸν ἐμοὶ Σεμέλης στεροπὴν ἐλάχειαν ἀείρειν (Fine thing it would be for me to wield the small lightning of Semele!). Till now it has sounded rather obscure: the correction by Graefe of ἐλάχειαν,[171] found in the mss, into ὀλέτειραν was still accepted by Keydell.[172] Nonnus' στεροπὴ ἐλάχεια corresponds perfectly to Ovid's *levius fulmen*: it seems to us that our comparison can safely uphold the legitimacy of the accepted reading of the Nonnian line, and confirms the thesis of a direct connection between the Greek poet and the Latin one.[173]

170 Haupt, Ehwald, and von Albrecht 1966, *comm. to Met.* 3.307. See also Bömer 1969, *ad l.*
171 Graefe 1819.
172 Keydell 1959.
173 Cf. D'Ippolito 1962b. My defense of the transmitted reading was accepted in the Budé edi-

11 Conclusion

I wish to conclude by quoting the words of Livrea: "Ci risulta sempre più valido e vincolante il principio metodico di considerare Nonno non come un tardo ed esangue epigono della cultura poetica omerico-alessandrina, bensì come uno dei più vivaci e creativi rappresentanti della cultura tardoantica e protobizantina."[174] We want to believe in the solution to the "Nonnian question" proposed by the researcher, though it has inevitably been criticized precisely because of its overwhelming novelty. The reason for believing in it is that it is the one that undoubtedly qualifies Nonnus as a great figure in the Greek literary universe. And in taking up the comparison with Ovid, I would like to underscore something more than the minute, numerous, and remarkable similarities: both poets are the most remarkable representatives of ancient Baroque, one of Latin Baroque, the other of Greek Baroque. They appear as two poets who, in terms of the formal aspect, think the same way: in their respective languages, they offer us the most musical and refined hexameters that one can possibly hear and, though very distant from one another in terms of their ideological worlds, their narrations and descriptions are unique in the ancient world in their variety and the richness of their colors.[175]

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tion by Chrétien 1985, *pace* West 1986, 210, who in reviewing the volume oddly finds it "at best obscure."

174 In Greco 2004, v.

175 So Liebeschuetz, "Attempts to prove that Nonnus has imitated particular passages of Ovid have been far from conclusive, but the general kinship in spirit remains intriguing" (2001, 233).

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PART 1

Nonnus and the Literary Tradition

CHAPTER 1

"Breaking the Fourth Wall": On Literariness and Metalepsis in Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*

Berenice Verhelst

As the technical term for a rhetorical trope, μετάληψις was defined by ancient theorists as a type of metaphor based on synonymy and homonymy. The stock example used by Tryphon (*Trop.* 5) and Quintilian (8.6.37) are Homer's "νήσοισιν … θοῇσιν" (*Od.* 15.299: "swift islands") where, according to their analysis θοός replaces ὀξύς in the meaning of "sharp" because ὀξύς can in other situations be used as a synonym for θοός in the meaning of "swift." Quintilian concluded rather pragmatically that we should be aware of the trope's existence, but advised against using it.

Ironically, the Greek word μετάληψις underwent a strong μετάληψις (in its more general ancient meaning of a metaphorical shift of meaning) when it was "recycled" by Gérard Genette as a narratological term. He introduced it in his 1972 monograph *Discours du récit* (I here use the 1980 English translation) in order to describe, in the context of a narrative, "any intrusion by the extradiegetic narrator or narratee into the diegetic universe (or by diegetic characters into a metadiegetic universe, etc.), or the inverse."[1] In the world of theater this is a well-known phenomenon, usually referred to as the breaking of the fourth wall. Its effect was described by Genette as one of strangeness that can either be comical or fantastic.[2]

The idea that characters may become aware of the fictionality of their own existence or that narrators may enter the fictional world of their own story will, in the first place, be associated with modern fantastic literature. People of my own generation will remember the exciting children's books they grew up with, like *The Neverending Story* or *Sophie's World* in which the transgression of narrative boundaries is a central plot element.[3] Since Genette's coinage

1 Genette 1980, 234–235. Later, in his monograph *Métalepse* (2004, 7–11), Genette reconnected his own narratological term with the ancient trope by referring to the metaphorical use of the figure of the poet for the subjects of his songs (cf. examples 2c and 5b below).

2 Genette 1980, 235.

3 Michael Ende's novel *Die unendliche Geschichte* first appeared in German in 1979. The main character, Bastian, reads a fantastic book and ends up trapped inside its fictional world. In

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of the term, however, narratologists have defined several types of metalepsis and the examples given by them are by no means limited to fantastic literature or to (post-) modern times. In the field of classics, the phenomenon has been given an increasing amount of attention recently. The publication of Irene de Jong's influential article "Metalepsis in Ancient Greek Literature" in 2009 was followed by a first (Gießen 2011) and second (Oxford 2015) international conference dealing specifically with this topic.[4]

In this chapter, I will discuss a number of possibly metaleptic passages in Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*. My analysis focuses on the effects and functions of metalepsis. The effect of "strangeness" described by Genette implies a type of metalepsis that breaks (sometimes only temporarily) the reader's suspension of disbelief and reminds him of the fictionality of the story.[5] However, as was emphasized by Monika Fludernik, metalepsis is not always an "anti-illusionistic" device, but can also be used—in realistic genres—with the opposite effect to enhance the realistic illusion when the narrator, for example, invites the narratee to enter the room he describes or addresses a character in a spontaneous expression of pity.[6] In the conclusion of de Jong's 2009 article, she highlights this latter distinction as the "major difference between modern and ancient examples of metalepsis."[7] Ancient examples are "for the most part serious (rather than comic) and are aimed at increasing the authority of the narrator and the realism of his narrative (rather than breaking the illusion)."[8] Nonnus, I will argue, may be one of the exceptions to this general rule.[9]

Jostein Gaarder's novel, originally published in Norwegian as *Sofies Verden* (1991), the main characters (Sophie and Alberto) discover they are characters in a fictional world governed by an almighty author.

4 The proceedings of the first conference are published as Eisen and von Möllendorff 2013. Metalepsis is also a central topic in Whitmarsh 2008 and 2013, and Di Nino (2018).

5 Genette 1980, 235. Wagner 2002, 239–240 argued that all types of metalepsis have in common that they reveal the "essence construite du récit" (in some cases non-intentionally). De Jong 2009, 91–92 gives an overview of the scholarly discussion about the different functions of metalepsis.

6 Fludernik 2003, 384, 392. Fludernik points out several examples of narrators entering the story to enhance the realistic illusion (examples from Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* [1742] and George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* [1860]). The narrator addressing his characters in an apostrophe has a similar effect. For this "relatively straightforward" and common type of metalepsis in Greek literature, see de Jong 2009, 93–97 and n. 21 below.

7 De Jong 2009, 115.

8 De Jong 2009, 115. Her conclusion was later confirmed in Eisen and von Möllendorf 2013, 8 (in the introduction to their edited volume).

9 Nonnus is certainly not the only exception. Cf. Whitmarsh 2008 on Lucian's use of metalepsis, which is characteristically comical, often fantastic, and deliberately anti-illusionistic. On metalepsis in the *Dionysiaca*, it is now also possible to consult Camille Geisz's 2018 monograph,

1 Author's Metalepsis

Based on Genette's preliminary observations, Monika Fludernik in 2003 defined five types of metalepsis. I only discuss the first three, which are also the most clearly metaleptic ones, while one of my examples also allows a brief excursus about the fourth.[10] The first is the so-called "author's metalepsis." Author's metalepses "foreground the nature of the narrative as *fictio*" and thus break the mimetic illusion. Metalepsis in this case is a truly anti-illusionistic device. The three most conspicuous examples from Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* are cited as examples 1a–c (12.292–294, 41.155–157 and 47.256–259 respectively).[11] In all three cases a story that has been told as if it was true, is afterwards revealed by the narrator as only one of two possible versions, after which the narrative continues with, in 1a, an "older" (12.294 πρεσβυτέρη)—and thus more authoritative?[12]—or, in 1b, a "more recent" (41.155 ὁπλοτέρη)—and therefore more appealing?[13]—alternative (41.155–157), whereas in 1c the original story is fully rejected as fictitious, after which it is juxtaposed with the "true" (47.257 ἐτήτυμον)[14] account of what happened.[15]

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which analyzes the role of the narrator. She discusses several types of metalepsis in Nonnus, especially regarding metaleptic apostrophes and the way the narratee is involved in the story, on both of which more below. I will rather focus on the "anti-illusionistic" types of metalepsis.

10 Fludernik's fifth type is the "pseudo-diegetic or reduced metadiegetic," which describes the phenomenon when the borders between an embedded narrative and the frame narrative fade. However, she does not consider this type as "properly metaleptic" (2003, 388). Cf. de Jong 2009, 99–106 on "blending of narrative voices" in Greek literature.

11 For an analysis of the same three fragments as examples of the narrator's self-confident interventions in the *Dionysiaca*'s narrative, see also Geisz 2018, 78–87, who does not consider them as examples of metalepsis.

12 See also Vian 1995, 202–203: "Logiquement, une variante mérite un moindre crédit … Il ne constitue en principe qu' une digression, alors que la légende d' Ampelos s' étend sur trois chants. Néanmoins, il faut observer que Nonnos oublie aussitôt qu' il rapporte une simple variante, car c' est à ce second récit que se raccorde le ch. XIII. La raison de cette anomalie est contenue dans l' expression "πρεσβυτέρη … φάτις" (v. 294): Nonnos apprend par là à son lecteur que le second récit est le plus ancien et le plus autorisé."

13 See also Chuvin and Fayant 2006, 19–20. Here the more recent version is presented as the more conventional one. Beroe has to be Aphrodite's daughter to make Nonnus' Beroe episode "work." Cf. Chuvin and Fayant 2006, 20: "Cette modification est nécessaire pour motiver la consultation des destins du monde par Aphrodite."

14 The first version of the story, dubbed as "legendary" by Nonnus follows the convention (cf. Aratus) that the constellations did not exist before the catasterism of the mythological character they are named after. The second "truthful" version follows the idea pronounced in Pl. *Ti.* 41 that the souls join pre-existing stars. See also Fayant 2000, 28–30.

15 The device of the "Alexandrian footnote" (for a definition see Hinds 1998, 1–5) has a sim-

(1a) Καὶ τὰ μὲν ἀμπελόεντος ἀείδεται ἀμφὶ κορύμβου
πῶς πέλεν ἡβητῆρος ἐπώνυμος. Ὑμνοπόλων δέ
ἄλλη πρεσβυτέρη πέλεται φάτις …

That is the song they sing about the grape-cluster, how it got its name from the young man. But the poets have another and older legend …[16]

(1b) Ἀλλά τις ὁπλοτέρη πέλεται φάτις, ὅττί μιν αὐτή
ἀνδρομέης Κυθέρεια κυβερνήτειρα γενέθλης
Ἀσσυρίῳ πάνλευκον Ἀδώνιδι γείνατο μήτηρ·

But there is a younger legend, that her mother was Cythereia herself, the pilot of human life, who bore her all white to Assyrian Adonis.

(1c) Καὶ τὰ μὲν ἔπλασε μῦθος Ἀχαιικὸς ἠθάδα πειθώ
ψεύδεϊ συγκεράσας. Τὸ δ᾽ ἐτήτυμον, ὑψιμέδων Ζεύς
ψυχὴν Ἠριγόνης σταχυώδεος ἀστέρι Κούρης
οὐρανίης ἐπένειμεν ὁμόζυγον …

Such is the fiction of the Achaian story, mingling as usual persuasion with falsehood: but the truth is: Zeus our Lord on high joined the soul of Erigone with the star of the heavenly Virgin holding an ear of corn …

2 Descending Metalepsis

If we take up our metaphor of the "breaking of the wall," one could say that an author's metalepsis destroys the entire wall. The illusion is broken entirely, although in the three Nonnian examples the story that was revealed as fictitious is quickly replaced by an alternative fiction. The destructiveness of this type of metalepsis sets it apart from the other types in which the wall has become permeable. The wall still stands, but there are holes in it that allow transgressions from the one side to the other. This can logically happen in two directions: the narrator and narratee can break into the world of the characters,

ilar effect, when the narrator briefly refers to his sources. In Nonnus' idiom, the narrator typically uses the verb "ἀκούω" in the first person to do so. See Geisz 2018, 70–73.

16 For the Greek text of the *Dionysiaca*, I use the Belles Lettres edition of Vian et al. (1976–2006). All translations are by Rouse (1940), adapted when necessary to correspond to the Belles Lettres edition.

or the characters can break out. The first case we may call an inward or descending transgression, the second case an outward or ascending transgression.[17] In most studies of metalepsis, the focus lays on the first possibility, thereby following the lead of Genette himself, who only briefly considered the second possibility, defined by him as an inverse metalepsis or antimetalepsis.[18]

I return to the possibility of ascending metalepsis in Nonnus below, after briefly discussing a few examples of descending metalepsis, hereby adopting the principle that the perspective of the agent of the transgression[19] defines the direction of the metalepsis.

3 Narrator Breaking In

"The literal move of the narrator to a lower narrative level" (from Fludernik's definition of the second type of metalepsis)[20] is the best known and perhaps also the most frequently occurring type of metalepsis. I have already mentioned the metaleptic apostrophe, which is a classic example of this category.[21] Compared to other Greek epic poets, Nonnus' use of the apostrophe is not so very different nor very prominent. The *Dionysiaca*, however, also offers two examples of metalepsis which go beyond a mere apostrophe and show a narrator who becomes physically present in the (or rather "a") story world. I am, of course, referring to the *Dionysiaca*'s two prologues, which have already received much scholarly attention.[22] I only point out the metaleptic aspects.

In this respect, the first prologue has two points of interest. The first is the relation between the poet figure and the Muses. As the conventional intermediaries between the epic narrators and the world of the stories they tell, the Muses

17 See also Klimek 2010, who makes the same basic distinction between "absteigende Metalepsen" and "aufsteigende Metalepsen."

18 Genette 1980, 234; 2004, 27.

19 The narrator, narratee, or character (on any diegetic level) who initializes the metaleptic move.

20 Fludernik 2003, 384. Her "second type" describes a descending transgression, but offers two possibilities regarding the agent of the transgression, which can either be the narrator or a character. For the latter possibility, see also below under "Descending Metalepsis by Characters."

21 On the phenomenon of the apostrophe in ancient Greek poetry, see de Jong 2009, 93–97 (mostly Homer); Klooster 2013 (Homer, Apollonius and Callimachus); and Geisz 2018, 231–246 (Homer, Apollonius and Nonnus).

22 On the *Dionysiaca*'s proems, see especially Gigli Piccardi 1993 and 2016, 424–431; Agosti 1996; Giraudet 2005; Bannert 2008; Paschalis 2014, 97–108; and most recently Geisz 2018, 9–35, 247–258.

are metaleptic figures by definition. The fact that Nonnus' narrator is not only mentally connected with the Muses (divine inspiration), but also physically joins their dance (1.13 χοροῦ ψαύοντι), is not so very exceptional in itself—there is the much imitated precedent of Hesiod—but the fact that both the narrator and the Muses adopt the attributes (instruments and clothes, 1.12–13 and 34–36) of a Bacchic procession in order to blend in with the subject of the poem, indicates from the start that the wall between the world of the narrator and the world of Dionysus is very thin.

The second is the interaction between the epic narrator and Proteus, who is brought to the gathering of the Muses and the narrator on the latter's request. The fourth wall has become permeable here because of the geographical "melting" of the mythical and real worlds. The island of Pharos, close to the poet figure's writing table in Alexandria (1.13 Φάρῳ παρὰ γείτονι νήσῳ) is also the home of the mythical sea god.[23] This allows the narrator to meet Proteus and take on the role of Menelaos, who in the *Odyssey* (4.333–592) acts as a secondary narrator, when he tells the story of his encounter with Proteus to Telemachus. Menelaos and our poet figure are, however, two different kinds of narrators. The latter not only refuses to wear Menelaos' seal skin (*Dion.* 1.38 φωκάων βαρὺ δέρμα φυλασσέσθω Μενελάῳ)—another proof of their belonging to the same "story world" in this passage—but also does not use it to trick and capture Proteus.

(2a) ταῦτα δ᾽ ἅμ᾽ εἰρωτᾷς καὶ λίσσεαι, οὐκ ἂν ἐγώ γε
ἄλλα παρὲξ εἴποιμι παρακλιδόν, οὐδ᾽ ἀπατήσω,
ἀλλὰ τὰ μέν μοι ἔειπε γέρων ἅλιος νημερτής,
τῶν οὐδέν τοι ἐγὼ κρύψω ἔπος οὐδ᾽ ἐπικεύσω.

But in this matter of which you ask and beseech me, be sure I shall not swerve aside to speak of other things, nor will I deceive you; on the contrary, of all that the unerring old man of the sea told me not one thing will I hide from you or conceal.[24]

For Menelaos in the *Odyssey*, the fact that he has defeated the metamorphosing Proteus is a truth warrant for his story (2a: *Od.* 4.347–350). After having cap-

23 My interpretation of this prologue as an example of descending metalepsis rests on the fact that it is the narrator who takes the initiative to meet Proteus, although it is not made explicit in which world (mythical Pharos or the narrator's own Pharos) the meeting takes place. The difference with the situation in the first part of the second prologue (cf. below, under "Ascending Metalepsis") is subtle.

24 For both the Greek text and the translation I here follow Murray 1995.

tured the god and finally forced him to resume his anthropomorphic shape, Menelaos was not only able to return home from Egypt without further detours (*Od.* 4.570–586), but the straightforward answer he got from the no longer evasive Proteus now also allows him to tell a linear story.

(2b) στήσατέ μοι Πρωτῆα πολύτροπον, ὄφρα φανείη
ποικίλον εἶδος ἔχων, ὅτι ποικίλον ὕμνον ἀράσσω.
Εἰ γὰρ ἐφερπύσσειε δράκων κυκλούμενος ὁλκῷ,
μέλψω θεῖον ἄεθλον, ὅπως κισσώδεϊ θύρσῳ
φρικτὰ δρακοντοκόμων ἐδαΐζετο φῦλα Γιγάντων·
[19–33: five more metamorphoses, five more subjects]

But bring me …, Proteus of many turns, that he may appear in all his diversity of shapes, since I twang my harp to a diversity of songs. For if, as a serpent, he should glide along his winding trail, I will sing my god's achievement, how with ivy-wreathed wand he destroyed the horrid hosts of Giants serpent-haired.

Nonnus' poet figure, on the other hand takes pleasure in observing Proteus' many and arbitrary metamorphoses (2b: *Dion.* 1.14–33). Instead of forcing him to stop metamorphosing, he willfully adapts his narrative to Proteus' every whim. He does not take his victory over the metamorphic god as his truth warrant, but rather takes the unpredictable and constantly varying metamorphoses themselves as the guiding principle for his story. The idea that he adapts his subject *as soon as* Proteus again changes shape is a simultaneity figure, and in this respect a complex example of what Fludernik calls "rhetorical metalepsis" (this is her fourth category).[25] Rhetorical metalepsis creates the illusion that narrating time and narrated time pass simultaneously, so that, for example, the narrator may have to wait for a character to have reached the top of a hill.[26] In Nonnus, however, the act of narrating Dionysus' story is synchronized not with the life of Dionysus, but with the swift metamorphoses of Proteus, which creates the effect of a disjointed synchronicity. The swift succession

25 Fludernik 2003, 386–387, esp. 387: "The supposed simultaneity or rather isochrony between the telling of the story and the time moving on the plane of the narrated world, the synchronization of narrating time and narrated time … the projected simultaneity metaphorically moves the narrator into the realm of the fictional world."

26 Fludernik (2003, 386) reuses Genette's (1980, 65) example of the churchman climbing the ramps of Angoulême (Balzac, *Les souffrances de l'inventeur*), while the narrator "uses" this time to explain some background information.

of the metamorphoses of Proteus contrasts with the much longer periods of Dionysus' life referred to, while simultaneously the arbitrariness of the successive metamorphoses shuffles the different "chapters" of his life story out of their chronological order.

The second prologue takes the scenario from the first prologue one metaleptic step further. Whereas in the first prologue the narrator has a Hesiodian encounter with the Muses and—because of their mediation—with the Homeric Proteus, in the second prologue the narrator of the *Dionysiaca* enters the fictional world of his own story, in order to fight side by side with Dionysus in the Indian War.[27] He was already carrying Bacchic attributes in the first prologue, now he will actually use his new—warlike—attributes within the fictional world, to kill his protagonist's enemies. The Muse also breaks into the narrative. She is asked by the narrator to join the fighting in the very first line of this prologue (*Dion.* 25.1 Μοῦσα, πάλιν πολέμιζε σοφὸν μόθον ἔμφρονι θύρσῳ) and is joined there by him shortly afterwards (25.22 Ἀλλὰ πάλιν κτείνωμεν Ἐρυθραίων γένος Ἰνδῶν). After a long intermezzo, the metalepsis is fully developed in 25.264–270 (2c).

(2c) Ἀλλά, θεά, με κόμιζε τὸ δεύτερον ἐς μέσον Ἰνδῶν,
ἔμπνοον ἔγχος ἔχοντα καὶ ἀσπίδα πατρὸς Ὁμήρου,
μαρνάμενον Μορρῆι καὶ ἄφρονι Δηριαδῆι
σὺν Διὶ καὶ Βρομίῳ κεκορυθμένον· ἐν δὲ κυδοιμοῖς
Βακχιάδος σύριγγος ἀγέστρατον ἦχον ἀκούσω
καὶ κτύπον οὐ λήγοντα σοφῆς σάλπιγγος Ὁμήρου,
ὄφρα κατακτείνω νοερῷ δορὶ λείψανον Ἰνδῶν.

Then bring me, O goddess, into the midst of the Indians again, holding the inspired spear and shield of Father Homer, while I attack Morrheus and the folly of Deriades, armed by the side of Zeus and Bromios! Let me hear the syrinx of Bacchos summon the host to battle, and the ceaseless call of the trumpet in Homer's verse, that I may destroy what is left of the Indians with my spear of the spirit.

The explicit partiality of the narrator and the Muse, supporting one of the two parties in the war they describe, is remarkable, because it is in contradiction

27 See also Shorrock 2001, 172: "Further *conscious blurring of the boundaries between the world of the poet and the world of his characters* comes at the point when Nonnus asks the Muse to transport him back to the narrative of the Indian War" (my emphasis). Cf. Geisz 2018, 247–258.

with the convention of epic objectivity,[28] but the metalepsis does not strike us as strange, because it is not anti-illusionistic. The narrator's emotional involvement and his being "sucked into" his own story invites the narratee to react similarly, to forget the real world and plunge into the fictional war. From τὸ δεύτερον (25.264) we can deduce that also in the first half of the *Dionysiaca* the narrator had already been immersed in the Dionysiac world. This was never made explicit, but is presented as the logical effect of the story on its narrator. The need to re-enter the story at this point is created by the truly anti-illusionistic effect of the second prologue itself (between line 1 and line 264), which can be compared with the break between two halves of a modern theater play. The world of fiction is temporarily suspended in this period, until, in this passage, the narrator steps back in and invites his narratees with him.

Interesting, too, are the references to Homer in this passage. Nonnus' narrator claims to use the spear and shield of Homer (not Achilles!) and to hear his ceaseless trumpet (Homer's hexameter, or the actual trumpets on the Trojan battlefield?). The author Homer is identified with his subject of epic war in the same way that Nonnus' narrator himself adopts the attributes of Dionysus. This is also metalepsis. Not only is the *Dionysiaca*'s fourth wall broken; the *Iliad's* wall is also damaged.[29]

4 The Narratee's Eyes and Ears

Fludernik's third type of metalepsis involves the narratee, who can also become physically present on the level of the story.[30] Although there are no extreme cases of interaction between the narratee and the poem's characters in Nonnus (like between the narrator and Proteus) or of the narratee's involvement in the main action (like the narrator who wants to fight alongside Dionysus), the narratee's presence is regularly evoked by the narrator who hypothesizes about the narratee's reactions, should he be really present. I only briefly discuss one example (3: 25.421–428) and refer to Camille Geisz' book for a full analysis of

28 On the question of the (illusion of) objectivity and impartiality of the Homeric narrator, see de Jong 1987 and 2006. On the overt partiality of the Nonnian narrator, see Geisz 2018, 100–120; see also Vian 1991, 474; and Kuhlmann 1999, 392–393.

29 Cf. Genette's classic example "Au IVe livre de l'Éneide, Virgile fait mourir Didon" (2004, 12; already briefly discussed in 1980, 234).

30 Fludernik 2003, 385–386. In this category, she considers both ascending and descending metalepsis.

this and other examples.[31] This passage is part of the long ekphrasis of Dionysus' shield, pronounced by the narrator (25.386–562).

(3) καὶ τάχα φαίης …
ποιητὴν περ ἐοῦσαν, ὅτι σκιρτήματι παίζων
κωφὸς ἀκινήτης ἐλελίζετο παλμὸς ἐρίπνης·
σιγαλέῃ δὲ λύρῃ μεμελημένον ἄνδρα δοκεύων,
κραιπνὸν ἀνακρούοντα μέλος ψευδήμονι πετρῇ,
ἄγχι μολεῖν ἔσπευδες, ὅπως τεὸν οὖας ἐρείσας
πυργοδόμῳ φόρμιγγι καὶ ὑμετέρην φρένα τέρψῃς,
μολπῆς ἑπτατόνοιο λιθοσσόον ἦχον ἀκούων.

It was only a work of art, but you might have said, the immovable rock silently skipped and tripped along! When you saw the man busy with his silent harp, striking up a quick tune for a make-believe rock, you would quickly come closer to stretch your ear and delight your own heart with that harp which could build a wall, to hear the music of seven strings which could make the stones to move.

Whereas the hypothetical nature of the narratee's reaction prevents it from being a real transgression of diegetic levels, this example clearly plays with the boundaries between three concentric "worlds," and the media in which they are captured. Besides the outer world of narrator and narratee, there is the world of the story, captured in the medium of the poem and consisting of words that can be heard (but not of images). And there is the world of the embedded story, captured in the medium of the shield (which only exists within the world of the poem) and consisting of images that can be seen (but not of sounds and without movement). The ἐνάργεια of the description *almost* allows the narratee to see, the ἐνάργεια of the artwork *almost* to hear, while the illusion that the narratee might actually hear Amphion's lyre is thwarted by the anti-illusionistic reminders that it is only depicted on a manmade object (422 ποιητὴν περ ἐοῦσαν, 425 ψευδήμονι πετρῇ) and therefore silent (423 κωφός, 424 σιγαλέῃ). When the narrator invites the narratee to stretch his ear to Amphion's harp, and thus to move down two diegetic levels at once (from *hearing* the story to *hearing* the harp, blotting out the intermediary visual experience), he simultaneously problematizes the narratee's synesthetic experience.[32]

31 See Geisz 2018, 123–209 for an analysis of all passages in the *Dionysiaca* where the narrator directly or indirectly addresses the narratee.

32 Geisz 2018, 148 also points out the similarity with Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 1.765–767, which

5 Descending Metalepsis by Characters: More Shields

A final possibility of descending metalepsis, which I have thus far left aside and which by Fludernik is treated as a subcategory of her second type of metalepsis, is the "move … of a character to a lower (intra)diegetic level" (2003, 386), which allows us to linger a bit longer on the shield of Dionysus. Before it is described by the narrator, it is also described by Attis, who delivers it to Dionysus, and this in a clearly metaleptic fashion (4a: 25.352–360).

(4a) Αἰθέρος ἀστερόεσσαν ἀνούτατον ἀσπίδα πάλλων,
ὦ φίλος, οὐ τρομέεις χόλον Ἄρεος, οὐ φθόνον Ἥρης,
οὐ μακάρων στίχα πᾶσαν, ἔχων παμμήτορα Ῥείην,
οὐ στρατὸν ἀγκυλότοξον, ὅπως μὴ δούρατα πέμπων
Ἠέλιον πλήξειεν ἢ οὐτήσειε Σελήνην.
τίς ξίφος Ὠρίωνος ἀμαλδύνειε μαχαίρῃ,
ἢ χθονίοις βελέεσσιν ὀιστεύσειε Βοώτην;
Ἀλλ᾽ ἐρέεις γενέτην κεραελκέα Δηριαδῆος·
Ὠκεανὸν φορέοντι τί σοι ῥέξειεν Ὑδάσπης;

If you carry this starry shield of the sky inviolate, my friend, you need not tremble before the wrath of Ares, or the jealousy of Hera, or all the company of the Blessed, while Allmother Rheia is with you; you need fear no army with bended bows, lest they cast their spears and strike Helios or wound Selene! Who could blunt the sword of Orion with a knife, or shoot the Waggoner with earthly arrows? Perhaps you will name the hornstrong father of Deriades: but what could Hydaspes do to you when you can bring in Oceanos?

Attis describes the shield as a powerful weapon, not because of its material, but because of the images on the surface of the shield, which are, as he sees it, no mere representations. By attacking the shield, according to Attis, Dionysus' enemies would be attacking the sun, the moon, the constellations and the ocean. Within his speech (a secondary narrative in itself) the wall between the world of the Indian War narrative and the world depicted on the shield (as a lower diegetic level) has entirely disappeared.

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describes the narratee's reaction to the description of Jason's cloak and how the narratee will wish to hear the embroidered ram and Phrixus talk.

Quite the opposite situation can be found in yet another passage involving a decorated shield. Morrheus' shield, has in this example been hit by a stone hurled at him by his beloved Chalcomede (4b: 34.295–296).

(4b) γραπτὸν ἐμῆς ἀλόχου τύπον ἔξεσας· αἴθε καὶ αὐτῆς
Χειροβίης ἤμησας ἀληθέος αὐχένα νύμφης.

You have torn off the portrait of my wife: I only wish you had cut the throat of Cheirobië, the real wife!

In this example the image on the shield remains only a picture, and the damage done to the shield does not affect the actual wife, although Morrheus would have wished it did. The metaleptic transfer of the injury from the picture to its "real life" counterpart (on a higher diegetical level) does not take place.

6 Ascending Metalepsis

Ascending metalepsis, on the other hand, implies a certain self-awareness of the characters as characters in a story. The concept's relevance for the study of ancient literature was pointed out by de Jong by drawing attention to the relatively common phenomenon in ancient Greek literature (from Homer onwards) of characters announcing the text in the text.[33] The examples from Nonnus I want to discuss, however, do not conform to any of de Jong's categories. They can be divided into two further categories of examples, by distinguishing between examples from the prologues and examples from the narrative proper. The first category consists of two explicitly metaleptic passages in the second prologue of the *Dionysiaca*.

(5a) Θήβῃ δ' ἑπταπύλῳ κεράσω μέλος, ὅττι καὶ αὐτή
ἀμφ' ἐμὲ βακχευθεῖσα περιτρέχει, οἷα δὲ νύμφη
μαζὸν ἑὸν γύμνωσε κατηφέος ὑψόθι πέπλου,
μνησαμένη Πενθῆος· ἐποτρύνων δέ με μέλπειν

33 Besides *Il.* 6.357–358 (Helen's famous statement that Hector will have to fight bravely in order to make the Trojans subjects of song for men of future generations), de Jong lists eight other examples from many different genres (historiography, novel, tragedy, bucolic poetry).

πενθαλέην ἔο χεῖρα γέρων ὤρεξε Κιθαιρών
αἰδόμενος, μὴ λέκτρον ἀθέσμιον ἠὲ βοήσω
πατροφόνον πόσιν υἷα παρευνάζοντα τεκούσῃ.

For sevengate Thebes I will brew my bowl of poesy, for she also dances wildly about me, baring her breast nymph-like over her robe in sorrow while she remembers Pentheus; old Cithairon urges me to sing, stretching out his mourning hand, fearing lest I proclaim the unhallowed bed or the father-slaying son, the husband who lay beside her who bore him.

In the first example (5a: 25.11–17), two personified places (the city of Thebes and Mount Cithaeron) approach the narrator while he is writing. Apparently, they try to influence him in his selection of narrative material. Their objectives are different. The dancing figure of Thebes, herself transformed into a Bacchant (25.12 βακχευθεῖσα) seems to want the narrator to join her in "remembering" (25.14 μνησαμένη) the dead hero Pentheus by telling his story. Whereas Thebes never addresses the narrator to voice a request—we can only guess her motives from her actions—Mount Cithaeron explicitly begs the narrator not to write about Oedipus' shameful incestuous relation with Jocasta. Before the narrator, later in the same prologue, enters the world of his characters, he is, while still in his own universe, approached by personified locations from the world he describes. Both personifications have witnessed the stories he is (or is not) going to tell. The difference with his earlier encounter with Proteus is subtle, but here Mount Cithaeron and the city of Thebes seem to take the initiative and try to influence the story, whereas it was the narrator himself who sought the company of Proteus.

(5b) Ὑμνήσειν μὲν ὄφελλε τόσον καὶ τοῖον ἀγῶνα
Μοῦσα τεὴ καὶ Βάκχον ἀκοντιστῆρα Γιγάντων,
ἄλλοις δ᾽ ὑμνοπόλοισι πόνους Ἀχιλῆος ἐάσσαι,
εἰ μὴ τοῦτο Θέτις γέρας ἥρπασεν.

Your Muse ought to have hymned so great and mighty a struggle, how Bacchos brought low the Giants, and ought to have left the labors of Achilles to other bards, had not Thetis stolen that glory from you.

The second example is even more striking. In this famous passage (5b: 25.257–260), the Nonnian narrator claims the superiority of his own subject over that of the *Iliad*, but interestingly also claims to know why Homer did not write

about Dionysus. It was Thetis who "stole the privilege (γέρας)"[34] of having the Homeric narrator sing his song about her son. Her deal with Zeus (*Il.* 1.493–530) becomes one with Homer. Like in example 2c above, this is not a transgression of the *Dionysiaca*'s own diegetic boundaries, but it describes a metaleptic situation in the context of Homer's *Iliad* by relating how one of its characters took action to make the narrator tell her story.[35]

Although the explicit metaleptic nature of these two passages remains exceptional, ascending metalepsis is not limited to the *Dionysiaca*'s prologues. In the narrative proper a few interesting examples also can be found.

7 Self-Aware Characters (1): Zeus' Epithets

In this final category, the transgression of boundaries is subtler and whether they can be considered as metaleptic is dependent on the reader's interpretation. I would argue, however, that the suggestion is certainly present and that the humor of these passages largely depends on this metaleptic suggestion. In each of the following examples there is a clear pun, which invites the reader to reflect on the appropriateness of an epithet for a character. What makes these subtle jokes work so well is the fact that the issue is raised not by the narrator, but by the characters themselves.

My first example, which is also the most conspicuous, shows Zeus as a potentially self-aware character.[36]

(6a) δείδια μυθοτόκον πλέον Ἑλλάδα, μή τις Ἀχαιῶν
ὑέτιον Τυφῶνα καὶ ὑψιμέδοντα καλέσσῃ
ἢ ὕπατον, χραίνων ἐμὸν οὔνομα. γίνεο βούτης
ἐς μίαν ἠριγένειαν, ἀμερσινόῳ δὲ λιγαίνων
ῥύεο ποιμενίῃ σέο πηκτίδι ποιμένα κόσμου,
μὴ νεφεληγερέταο Τυφωέος ἦχον ἀκούσω,
μὴ βροντὴν ἑτέροιο νόθου Διός, ἀλλά ἑ παύσω
μαρνάμενον στεροπῇσι καὶ αἰχμάζοντα κεραυνῷ.

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34 Note the careful choice of words. Not Briseis, but the *Iliad* itself has become Achilles' γέρας.

35 This metaleptic allusion to Homer recalls a similar situation in Philostr. *Her.* 43.13–15 where it is told that Odysseus made a deal with Homer, who in exchange for first-hand information agreed to tell a version of the Trojan War story in which Odysseus' role would be more positive than in reality.

36 This example, as well as example 7c below, are also discussed along similar lines in my chapter on potential τις-speech in Nonnus (Verhelst 2017, 141–167, esp. 159–163).

> I fear Hellas even more, that mother of romances—what if one of that nation call Typhon Lord of Rain, or Highest, and Ruling in the Heights, defiling my name! Become a herdsman for one day-dawn; make a tune on your mindbefooling shepherd's pipes, and save the Shepherd of the Universe, that I may not hear the noise of Cloud-gatherer Typhoeus, the thunders of a new impostor Zeus, that I may stop his battling with lightnings and volleying with thunderbolts!

When in book 1 Zeus' position on Olympus is threatened by Typhon, his first concern appears to be his reputation (6a: 1.385–392). What if Typhon, who tries to replace him, will now be described by the adjectives ὑέτιος, ὑψιμέδων and ὕπατος (1.386–387)? The weight attributed to these adjectives by Zeus, and his claim that they belong to him and not to Typhon identify them to the reader as no mere adjectives, but epithets that—as we know—are associated with Zeus in poetry.[37] The first two are alternatives, frequently used in Nonnus, for the typical Homeric epithets for Zeus. The third epithet (ὕπατος) is also common in Homer and a few lines later Zeus adds a fourth νεφεληγερέτα (1.390), which adds an unmistakable Homeric flavor.[38]

An important clue to interpret this example as metaleptic is Zeus' specification of who will use these epithets. The imagined speaker is τις Ἀχαιῶν (1.385), which reminds us of the Greeks of Homer, but more importantly he is conceived as an inhabitant of μυθοτόκον ... Ἑλλάδα (1.385), a country producing mythological stories with Zeus as one of their favorite subjects.[39] As a self-aware literary character, Zeus thus seems not only to care about his reputation within the literary world he is confined to, but also to fear the way his story will be told and he wants to keep his epithets to himself.

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37 Nonnus uses ὑέτιος twenty-five times in total, twenty-four times for Zeus and here denied to Zeus' opponent Typhon. It is not found elsewhere in poetry, but references to Ζεὺς as ὑέτιος can be found in Pausanias, Themistius, Julius Pollux, Epictetus, and Stobaeus. The epithet ὑψιμέδων for Zeus is first attested in Hesiod (*Theog*. 529) and also appears in Pindar, Bacchylides, and Aristophanes. In Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*, it is in thirty-two of all thirty-three cases used for Zeus, but here denied to Typhon. It also appears twenty-one times in the *Paraphrase* for God, possibly in imitation of Gregory of Nazianzus, who also frequently (fourteen times) uses the epithet in this way. The epithet ὕπατος is used eleven times for Zeus in Homer (of a total of thirteen occurrences). Including the variant ὑπατήιος, it occurs seven times in Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*, four times for Zeus, once for the splendor of Rome, once for a giant's neck, and here it is denied to Typhon.

38 Nonnus uses νεφεληγερέτα only five times (three times for Zeus, here Zeus uses it for Typhon, and elsewhere it is denied to Hephaestus as Zeus' son in another possibly metaleptic situation [*Dion*. 38.22–23]). In Homer it is used thirty-six times, exclusively for Zeus.

39 Cf. 47.256 μῦθος Ἀχαιικὸς, cited above as part of example 1c.

Zeus' concern about his epithets, moreover, ties in with the narrator's characterization strategies for Zeus and Typhon in the first books of the *Dionysiaca*. Typhon is portrayed as a false Zeus (1.295 Ζεὺς νόθος; also 1.391), a usurper, who tried to use Zeus' thunderbolt but failed to. On that occasion, he is described by the narrator as ἀννέφελος (1.299) and ἀδούπητος (1.300). Here it is the narrator who refuses to use the Homeric epithets of cloud-gatherer (νεφεληγερέτα) and thunderer (ἐρίγδουπος) for Typhon,[40] but does rather the opposite, turning them into negatives.

Finally in 1.430–434, Typhon uses these same two negative epithets himself for Zeus, when he boasts against Cadmus about his power and Zeus' helplessness. The story told to us through the epithets (by the narrator, but also by Zeus and Typhon themselves) thus mirrors the most important line of developments of the Typhonomachy in book 1 and underlines the effect of dramatic irony in the final dialogue between Cadmus and Typhon. Typhon here speaks triumphantly, but at this very point he is being defeated by Zeus and Cadmus.

(6b) ἀγρονόμοις δὲ
ἀντὶ κελαινεφέος κικλήσκεται ἀννέφελος Ζεύς.

The countryman speaks no more of Cloudy Zeus but Zeus Cloudless.

The game with Zeus' epithets may even continue across different storylines, as is apparent from example 6b (8.277–278). Zeus is here first called ἀννέφελος by his jealous wife Hera and later in the same episode by his jealous mistress Semele (8.326–327) who complains that he only appears as νεφεληγερέτα when he is with Hera. Important for my "metaleptic" point of view is also the structural resemblance between the reference to the epithets in 6a and 6b. Hera does not call Zeus ἀννέφελος herself, but indicates that he is called ἀννέφελος (8.278 κικλήσκεται). Again, there are hypothetical anonymous speakers, like the one in 6a, of whom Zeus feared that he would call (1.386 καλέσσῃ) Typhon ὑέτιος, ὑψιμέδων, and ὕπατος. In 6a our metaleptic interpretation was supported by the clear suggestion that this hypothetical speaker was "a Greek telling mythological stories about Zeus." In 6b, they (plural now) are "countrymen" (8.278 ἀγρονόμοις), which leaves entirely open the question of in which of both worlds they belong.

40 This epithet is used eleven times in Homer, of which ten times are for Zeus. It occurs only twice in the *Dionysiaca* (for the warlike cry of Dionysus and for the drums at the dinner party in Staphylus' palace).

Are both examples of metalepsis, or only 6a, or neither? It all depends on how far you would go in interpreting these passages. What is certain is that there is a literary game of allusions going on with Zeus' epithets, throughout book 1 and with a different twist again in book 8. Zeus' and Hera's words (like Typhon's and Semele's) can be interpreted within the confinements of the fictional world, but in both cases an additional metaleptic reading is possible—although the suggestion is stronger in 6a—and adds an extra humorous effect to these already light and playful passages.

8 Self-Aware Characters (2): More Epithets

Interestingly, the *Dionysiaca* has a few more examples in the same vein. Without trying to be exhaustive, I here discuss three additional cases that caught my eye (7a–c). In each of these three examples characters seem to allude jokingly to the epithets attributed to them or their conversation partners. The pun depends on the reader's identification of the epithets as a literary device, but becomes stronger when the (metaleptic) possibility is taken into account that the characters themselves also attribute their being called "X" or "Y" to a voice that is external to their mythological world.

(7a) χρυσῷ τεῦξον Ἄρηα μετὰ χρυσῆς Ἀφροδίτης 314
κερκίδα χειρὶ φέροντα καὶ οὐ πάλλοντα βοείην, 315
δίπλακα ποικίλλοντα σὺν ἐργοπόνῳ Κυθερείῃ. 316
Καὶ σὺ τεὸν μετὰ τόξον, Ἔρως, ἄτρακτον ἑλίσσων 309
μητέρι νήματα τεῦχε φιληλακάτῳ Κυθερείῃ, 310
ὄφρα μετὰ πτερόεντα καὶ ἱστοπόνον σε καλέσσω

> Make Ares of gold beside golden Aphrodite; let him hold a shuttle instead of waving a shield, and embroider a double cloth with industrious Cythereia. And you, Eros, leave your bow and help your mother in her passion for the distaff, twirl the spindle for her and spin the thread. Then I may call you weaver instead of winger ...

Example 7a (24.314–311) is part of the embedded story of Aphrodite at the loom in book 24. Hermes responds to Aphrodite's sudden change of career with a good sense of humor. In this fragment, part of Hermes' speech, he suggests that she may weave into her garment the image of "golden" Ares next to "golden" Aphrodite, thus making a pun at the golden thread of her ugly garment and her epithet of "golden Aphrodite." The golden Aphrodite on her garment will

not be golden in beauty, but only golden in fabric. Later on in the same passage he continues by addressing Eros, whom he threatens by suggesting that while he is assisting his mother at the loom his epithet πτερόεις (winged) will be replaced by a new epithet ἱστοπόνος (which the narratee will rather associate with Aphrodite's chaste counterpart Athena). This case is different from all other cases in that there is no hypothetical third voice: Hermes himself will use the new epithet.

(7b) Καὶ βρέφος ἀχλυόεντι δόμῳ πεφυλαγμένον ἔστω,
μηδέ μιν ἀθρήσειεν ἔσω γλαφυροῖο μελάθρου
ἠμάτιον Φαέθοντος ἢ ἔννυχον ὄμμα Σελήνης·
μηδέ ἑ κουρίζοντα, καὶ εἰ ταυρῶπις ἀκούει,
ζηλήμων βαρύμηνις ἴδῃ κεκαλυμμένον Ἥρη.

Let the child be kept safe in a gloomy room, and let neither the Sun's eye by day nor the moon's eye by night see him in your roofed hall. Cover him up, that jealous resentful Hera may never see him playing, though she is said to have eyes to see a bull.

Example 7b (9.65–69) is part of the speech of the same Hermes to Ino in book 9. Here Hermes is warning Ino to keep the baby Dionysus well hidden so that Hera will not be able to find and harm him. He adds in a concessive clause "even though she is called bull-eyed" with a clear pun on Hera's epithet of βοῶπις.[41] The substitution of βοῶπις by ταυρῶπις has probably to be understood as a reference to the tauriform Dionysus.[42] Ino will now have the challenge to hide bull-shaped Dionysus from bull-eyed (or rather "bull-seeing") Hera—not an easy task. Simultaneously, and perhaps that too is part of the pun, the substitution of βοῶπις by ταυρῶπις takes away the reference to the beauty of Hera's large eyes, which is implied in βοῶπις. Bull-eyes are probably not so flattering.

(7c) Πατρὸς ἐμοῦ πεφύλαξο βέλος λοχίοιο κεραυνοῦ,
μὴ στεροπὴν Βρομίοιο γενέθλιον εἰς σὲ κορύσσῃ·
ἅζεο, μὴ βαρύγουνος, ὅπως Ἀσωπός, ἀκούσῃς.

Beware the stroke of my father's thunderbolt of delivery, beware lest he raise against you the lightning which gave Bromios birth! Take care that you be not dubbed Heavy knee, like Asopos!

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41 Homer uses this epithet seventeen times, of which fourteen times for Hera. Nonnus only uses it four times and never for Hera.

42 See Chrétien 1985, 105.

Example 7c (23.230–232), finally, is the most clearly metaliterary example. It is part of the warning pronounced by Dionysus to the river Hydaspes in book 23. If the Hydaspes continues to kill Dionysus' soldiers, Dionysus will take action against him and burn the river dry. The warning ends with a metaleptic pun "beware that you will not be called βαρύγουνος, like the river Asopus," which can only be understood properly (by us *and* by Hydaspes, who is the text-internal narratee of Dionysus' speech) as a reference to Callimachus who was the first and only user of this epithet and coined it in his hymn to Delos to describe the river Asopus, after it was thunderstruck by Zeus.[43] If we then know that the anonymous voice calling Asopus βαρύγουνος is Callimachus, the suggestion is clear that also Hydaspes risks being called like this by another poet. The suggestion for the reader seems to be that this other poet is none other than Nonnus himself.

Are these also examples of the phenomenon we call metalepsis? I think one could argue that they are, at least to a certain extent, as the suggestion is clearly present. In all five cases (6a–b and 7a–c) the characters refer to the idea of being called "X" or "Y" and seem to discuss amongst themselves the appropriateness of their epithets. The interpretation of these passages as metalepsis helps to pinpoint what exactly makes them humorous. Essential in that respect is the distinction between what we as readers know and what the characters know. The suggestion that a character can consciously make a reference to Callimachus, make jokes about bull-eyed Hera, or worry about his reputation amongst myth-producing Greeks briefly lifts this distinction. The diegetic "wall" is broken from within.

9 Conclusion

A few general observations can now be made on Nonnus' use of metalepsis, which as a narrative phenomenon has as many appearances as Proteus, depending on the direction and the agent of the transgression. In the *Dionysiaca* the walls between the diegetic levels are not as solid as we would perhaps expect them to be. Characters and narrator alike seem to explore the possibilities of metaleptic transgressions. In most of the cases discussed in this chapter, the effect of the metaleptic transgression is humoristic and/or draws the

43 Cf. Callim. *Del.* 77–78 ὁ δ' εἵπετο πολλὸν ὄπισθεν / Ἀσωπὸς βαρύγουνος, ἐπεὶ πεπάλακτο κεραυνῷ. See Hopkinson 1994, 257. Apart from the Callimachean precedent, the adjective only occurs once before Nonnus (Theoc. *Id.* 18.10 βαρυγούνατος). Nonnus uses the Callimachean variant nineteen times in the *Dionysiaca* and once in the *Paraphrase*.

reader's attention to the fictionality or literariness of the world of Dionysus. The long in-proem of book 25, in which the transgressions are much more numerous than elsewhere, is the poem's most prominently anti-illusionistic passage. After the cliffhanger of book 24, it almost violently pulls "us" (Nonnus' modern readers as well as his contemporary audience) out of the fictional world in order to reflect on the poem's choice of subject. The metaleptic transgressions by the narrator are mirrored by those of the characters, who cast doubt on the existence of boundaries between their world and the worlds depicted on their shields. They worry about their reputation, while leaving it ambiguous what they fear most: our or their world's judgment. In sum, de Jong's very general conclusion that examples of metalepsis in antiquity are "for the most part serious (rather than comic) and … aimed at increasing the authority of the narrator and the realism of his narrative (rather than breaking the illusion)" does not apply to Nonnus. We may jokingly conclude that Nonnus—at least in this respect—seems to have more in common with authors of modern fantastic literature than with Homer, but this would, in my opinion, create a wrong impression. Nonnus' use of metalepsis is indeed remarkable, but probably was not quite as exceptional for (Late) Antiquity as we may think.

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CHAPTER 2

Junctures of Epic and Encomium in the *Dionysiaca*: The Episode of Staphylos

Laura Miguélez-Cavero

Within the broader Late Antique trend of renovation of literary genres,[1] Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* illustrates particularly well how an epic poem can assume elements characteristic of other genres.[2] This includes the polymorphic construct of the encomium: the proem refers to what follows as a hymn to Dionysus,[3] hymns being both an epic (starting with the Homeric hymns) and rhetorical form,[4] and the broad structure of the poem conforms to the tradition of the βασιλικὸς λόγος or imperial encomium.[5] Beyond this a number of speeches would have been identified by the Late Antique audience as panegyric.

Of course, Nonnus was not the only Late Antique poet who merged epic and encomium: for instance, Claudian penned and had performed poems that were both deeply epic and deeply panegyric for the inaugurations of the consulate and the epithalamia for relevant figures.[6] The production of Claudian and akin poets has often been labeled as "panegyric epic," a distinct subcategory of epic characterized by the ongoing relationship of poet and honorand

1 See Basson 1999; Charlet 1988, 2008; Fontaine 1977, 1988; Formisano 2007; Fuhrer 2013; Hinds 2013; Roberts 1989, 70–91; Whitby 2013. See Averil Cameron 2006, for genres in context. Methodological models: Barchiesi 2001a, 2001b; Conte 1994, 132; Gildenhard and Zissos 1999; Harrison 2002, 2013; Hinds 2000; Hutchinson 2013; Whitmarsh 2013, 36–41.

2 Overview for the *Dion.* in Miguélez-Cavero 2008, 167–180; Lasek 2016.

3 *Dion.* 1.1–10 (Sing, Muse, of the birth of Dionysus), 12 ἀειδομένου Διονύσου (singing of Dionysus), 15 ποικίλον ὕμνον ἀράσσω (the poet will sing a hymn [of Dionysus]).

4 Men. Rh. 333.1–344.14: different forms of hymn composition, including mythical hymns (338.1–339.32, defined in 333.15–18 "Mythical hymns are those which contain myths and proceed by bare allegory"—transl. Russell-Wilson 1981); 437.5–446.13 Sminthiac oration. Cf. Pernot 1993, 216–237. The most recent overview on hymns in the *Dion.* is D'Ippolito 2011.

5 On the βασιλικὸς λόγος, see Men Rh. 368.3–377.30. On the *Dion.*, see Vian 1976, xxii–xxix; Lasky 1978.

6 Inaugurations of consulate: *Panegyricus dictus Probino et Olybrio consulibus*, *Panegyricus de Tertio / Quarto / Sexto Consulatu Honorii Augusti*, *Panegyricus de Consulatu Flavii Manlii Theodori*, *Panegyricus de Consulatu Stilichonis*. Epithalamia: *Epithalamium de Nuptiis Honorii Augusti*, *Epithalamium Palladio et Celerinae*. Rules for the prose epithalamium: Men Rh. 399.11–405.13. On the emergence of epithalamium in verse, see Miguélez-Cavero 2008, 350–353. Claudian also composed the *De Raptu Proserpinae*, an equally rhetorical poem with no

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and the use of the poems as political tools.[7] Catherine Ware notes that Claudian's proems leave it clear that he conceived his poems as epic and concludes that epic itself had become panegyric in Late Antiquity, a trait Claudian emphasizes.[8] In fact, the bonds of epic and rhetoric go back to the first school compositions: students were asked to compose encomia on illustrious figures of the past analyzing their whole lives,[9] but as adults they would normally produce encomia of living or recently deceased figures for a particular situation, using mythical figures as spokespersons and means of comparison. The generic association had clearly reached high literature well before Nonnus' time and would not have been perceived as innovative or artificial by Nonnus or his audience.[10]

In what follows I shall start with an overview of the encomiastic speech acts in the *Dionysiaca* and their performative context, and focus for the second part on the speeches of the episode of Staphylos (books 18 and 19). Staphylos is a king,[11] but the speeches he addresses to Dionysus have points of contact with those of an imperial panegyrist.

direct use as panegyric (*pace* Hinds 2013, 182–183), which leaves us wondering about the meaning of the terms "epic" and "panegyric" as defined by his poetry. On generic play (epic, elegy, epithalamium) in *De raptu*, see Tsai 2007.

7 Gillett 2012, 265 n. 1: "'epic panegyric' … works in verse that are more specifically subdivided in modern discussions as panegyric, invective, historical epic, and mythological epic … A key feature of this subgenre was an ongoing relationship between poet and honorand"; 280: "Epic panegyric was a literary subgenre and political tool, stretching from the mid-390s to at least the 460s." See also Roberts 2001, 259, 263, 275–277.

8 Ware 2004, 2012. See also Pollmann 2001, 63. This goes along similar lines of what Harrison 2007 calls "generic enrichment," i.e., a genre assuming elements that have hitherto been characteristic of other genres.

9 Theory: e.g., Theon *Prog.* 110.27–35, 111.22–112.2. Practice: [Ps. Libanius] *Prog.* include encomia on Diomedes (VIII.216–225 Förster), Odysseus (VIII.225–235), Achilles (VIII.235–243), Thersites (VIII. 243–251), Demosthenes (VIII.251–257); invectives on Achilles (VIII.282–290), Hector (VIII.290–296), Philippos (VIII.296–301), Aeschines (VIII.301–306). See Pernot 1993, 76.

10 Gillett 2012, 268. On Statius as a forerunner, see Coleman 1999; Hinds 2000.

11 His kingship is emphasized by his title (*Dion.* 18.8 κοίρανος Ἀσσυρίων, 13=87=357 σκηπτοῦχος, 17=69=93=216=307 ἄναξ, 92=124=308=366 βασιλῆος), his palace (18.62–92), and clothing, all three inherited by his son Botrys (20.18–21, 101–107a, 120–123a).

1 Macro-Structure and Performative Context

A number of speeches or speech acts that would have reminded the Late Antique reader of an encomium:[12]

- 7.73–105: Zeus' prediction of the birth of Dionysus ≈ sections of family and birth in the *basilikos logos*[13] (esp. 97–105 Dionysus compared with Zeus, Hermes, Ares and Apollo).
- 13.19–34: Iris to Dionysus, exhorting him to destroy the race of the Indians as a means to earn recognition with his deeds, just as Hermes, Apollo, and his own father Zeus had done before him (22 αἰθέρος ἄξια ῥέξον …) ≈ propemptic talk to encourage a young man (see the next section).
- Books 18 and 19: Speeches by Staphylos and his wife Methe (analyzed in the next section).
- 20.44–98: Eris in the shape of Rhea, exhortation (I am ashamed of your unwarlike behavior), comparisons with Ares (50–52), Athena (53–61), Hermes and Apollo (62–66a)[14] ≈ propemptic talk to encourage a young man (see the next section).
- Book 25: Comparison of Dionysus and other children of Zeus ≈ *synkrisis* of the *basilikos logos* (Men. Rh. 372.21–25, 376.31–377.10). Nonnus explicitly says that he is going to evaluate the manhood or virility of the children of Zeus by comparing Dionysus with ancient (esp. Heracles) and present models (esp. Perseus, a contemporary of Dionysus).[15] The exploits of Dionysus judged here are both the "mythical" ones, such as the Gigantomachy, and the "present" ones (defeat of the Indians).[16]

12 This is by no means a complete evaluation of the influence of the encomium on the *Dion.*: compare for instance the narratives of the births of Beroe (*Dion.* 41.155–262) and emperor Honorius (Claudian, *P. Quarto Cons. Honorii* 121–211).

13 *P. Gr. Vindob.* 29788 (encomium on Theagenes, an Athenian patrician—Miguélez-Cavero 2008, cat. no. 54.4), from which only the long part on the γένος is preserved, including the comparison of Theagenes with his purported ancestors.

14 Also *Dion.* 30.258–292 Athena rebukes Dionysus when he is fleeing before Deriades.

15 *Dion.* 25.27–29 ἀλλὰ νέοισι καὶ ἀρχεγόνοισιν ἐρίζων / εὐκαμάτους ἱδρῶτας ἀναστήσω Διονύσου, / κρίνων ἠνορέην τεκέων Διός (But I will set up the toils and sweat of Dionysos in rivalry with both new and old; I will judge the manhood of the sons of Zeus). Greek text Vian 1976–2006; translation Rouse 1940.

16 *Dion.* 25.80–84 Perseus killed Medusa + 85–97 "The terrible exploits of Bacchos the Indian-slayer were not one Gorgon (85 Βάκχου δ' Ἰνδοφόνου βριαροῦ πόνος οὐ μία Γοργώ)" as in Perseus' case—Dionysus killed the Giants. *Dion.* 25.196–203a Heracles killed the hydra of Lerna—203b–210 "I do not see how to praise two fellows fighting with a miserable viper, and one job (205a εἷς πόνος) divided between two" whereas Dionysus killed the Giants. *Dion.* 25.242–252 "The labours of Heracles (242a ἆθλα μὲν Ἡρακλῆος) … were a petty job

There is one recurrent line of argumentation: Dionysus will only achieve the recognition he deserves for being a son of Zeus, when his own effort (πόνος) proves that he is worthy of it. He is constantly compared both with his father Zeus and his brothers (especially Hermes and Apollo).[17] This would be a straightforward line of enquiry for the author of an encomium whose subject has arrived to the throne because he is the son of the previous incumbent: the young king is called to display the appropriate virtues to prove he is a worthy heir,[18] in particular masculinity (ἀνδρεία or ἠνορέη), the virtue that is most royal,[19] illustrated by exertion (πόνος). The comparison of the honorand with gods and mythical heroes is a frequent strategy in any sort of encomium,[20] and Hermes was particularly well adapted for young men whose education was under his auspices.[21]

If we read the *Dionysiaca* as a poetic biography of a public person, it seems only natural that Dionysus receives the attentions of several panegyrists in different occasions. Panegyrics existed in series both from the perspective of the poet and his honorand: individuals of public standing (esp. the emperor) were regularly praised with encomia and criticized in invectives by different

(244a οὐτιδανὸς πόνος ἦεν) in the mountains, but the exploits of Bacchos (244b ἔργα δὲ Βάκχου), whether Giant of many arms of chief of the highcrested Indians, were not a deer … the victory of Dionysos was huge Deriades and twenty-cubit Orontes."

17 Dionysus' prowess is confirmed later in shorter narrative comments (e.g. *Dion*. 31.77–79 καὶ νέκυν Ἰνδὸν ὅμιλον ἀμειδέι δεῖξε Μεγαίρῃ / καὶ στρατιῆς ἱδρῶτα καὶ **ἠνορέην** Διονύσου·/ Ἰνδοφόνους δὲ Μέγαιρα **πόνους** ὁρόωσα Λυαίου …—"She pointed out to unsmiling Megaera the crowd of dead Indians, the sweat of the army and the prowess of Dionysus. When the Fury beheld the death-dealing feats of Lyaios …") and especially at the end of the poem, when he is admitted in Olympus with Zeus, Apollo and Hermes as a reward for his prowess (48.974–978).

18 E.g., Themistius *Or*. 14.182b "And it was not family connection which advanced you [Theodosius] to the purple, but virtue in superabundance, not close kinship but display of strength and manhood [ῥώμης ἀπόδειξις καὶ ἀνδρείας]." On the problematic principle of succession, see Börm 2015.

19 Men. Rh. 372.30 "Courage reveals an emperor more than do other virtues." According to Themistius (*Or*. 1.5c–6a) the emperor is most kingly when he displays his *andreia*, of a type superior to that of the soldier, because it is accompanied of other equally important virtues. On the ethical profile of the emperor, see Noreña 2011, 37–100. On the rhetoric of virtues, see Pernot 1993, 165–173.

20 *P.Argent*. 480 (War against the Persians by Diocletian and Galerius, on which see Miguélez-Cavero 2008, cat. no. 39.1), IV.5 begins the part of the σύγκρισις, comparing Diocletian and Zeus, Galerius with Apollo. Theory for the *basilikos logos* in Men. Rh.: 370.21–28 (family), 372.1–2 (education), 373.32–374.2 (emperor's battles). The epithalamium works with similar rules: 400.15–22. For Claudian, see Coombe 2015.

21 Compare *P.Oxy*. 7.1015 (encomium on Theon the gymnasiarch—juxtaposition of honors of Hermes and Theon), *P.Oxy*. 50.3537v (encomium on Antinous and Hermes).

individuals,[22] and a panegyrist would produce encomia for more than one honorand.[23] A public person and a panegyrist could team up to produce a stream of propaganda so as to influence the public opinion on a long term basis: the best-known case is the collaboration between Claudian and Honorius' strong man, Stilicho.[24] In the Eastern court we can think of Pamprepius at the service of the general Illus (Suda Π 137). In prose, Themistius has been said to praise Constantius in the terms which Constantius himself dictated (e.g., *Or.* 1.1b, 5b, 7c–d) and to advocate the virtues of established imperial policy to the senate (e.g., *Or.* 5 on the virtues of the in fact humiliating peace agreement of 363; *Or.* 16 reassuring that the Gothic peace of 382 was a good thing).[25]

The repetition of the same lines of argument in encomiastic speeches of the *Dionysiaca* makes us wonder: are Zeus, Athena, and Staphylos to be compared to the panegyrists who fulfill a civic honor to a king or distinguished visitor with their speeches, or to proper propagandists who side with the honorand to repeat the current lines of propaganda for the benefit of the audience?[26] The repetition of similar scenes (reception of an imperial visitor) makes inevitable the repetition of topics, but in the end all the speeches are written by Nonnus, who makes the narrator of his poem systematically take sides with Dionysus, as do writers of hymns and propagandists, not so much concerned with the truth as with its appropriate packaging.

However, whereas a real panegyrist would reserve his invectives for the enemies of his patron (e.g. Claudian *In Rufinum*, *In Eutropium*), Nonnus does include a number of invectives of Dionysus in the poem.[27] As with the encomia, the lines of argumentation are always the same: Dionysus is criticized for his cowardice and effeminacy, his success is attributed to magic, and his divinity negated. Like any public figure, Dionysus attracts both extreme praise and

22 See Heather 1998, 139–141 on Themistius' different presentations of the same figure.

23 Men. Rh. notes that the panegyrist should not make use of all of his advice in each piece he produces, but should take different routes in each of them: 398.1–6, 409.15–22.

24 Overall analysis of this partnership and its implications in Gillett 2012; Alan Cameron 2016, 133–146.

25 Heather 1998, 142–148; 2010.

26 On the differences between the two modes of communication, see Gillett 2012.

27 *Dion.* 10.170–191 Orontes' harangue to his troops, effectively an invective of Dionysus; 17.249–261 Orontes' deprecatory speech to Dionysus; 20.196–221 Iris in the shape of Ares spurs Lycurgus into combatting Dionysus, effectively an invective of Dionysus; 21.241–273 Deriades' rude response to Dionysus' ambassador; 27.22–135 Deriades' harangue to his soldiers before battle; 39.33–74 Deriades' harangue to his soldiers before battle; 44.134–183 Pentheus' menacing speech; 46.10–51 Pentheus' menacing speech. Analysis in Miguélez-Cavero 2010.

extreme criticism and none of the two extremes aims to do justice to the individual, rather, their purpose is to construct a fuller picture of the character.

2 A Panegyrical Test Case: The Episode of Staphylos (Books 18–19)

When the reader reaches the episode of Staphylos, Bacchus has already won his first battles: books 15–16 narrate his defeat of the Indians led by Astraeis and of the virgin Nicaea; in book 17 the Bacchic troops confront the Indians, and Dionysus demonstrates his superiority over the Indian chieftain Orontes. These exploits bolster the confidence of Dionysus, who can now boast of real military exploits suitable for an encomium.[28]

The episode of Staphylos, one in a series of hospitality scenes,[29] is designed to throw light on Dionysus' social and royal skills in times of peace, as required by the scheme of the *basilikos logos* (Table 2.1).[30]

Dionysus adapts to hosts of different social and geographic backgrounds: he magnanimously avoids being a burden for poor hosts and shares his own knowledge and possessions with them (Brongos, Icarios); he compliments the rich ones for their possessions (Staphylos); and he questions and makes use of the divine knowledge of Heracles with whom he relates in terms of equality. The most relevant column in the table here is that of reception: characters classed as uneducated or popular (Brongos and Icarios) offer an entertainment of song and dance. When entering the temple of Heracles Astrochiton, Dionysus invokes the deity with a hymn (40.369–410),[31] to enhance the "cosmic" atmosphere of the encounter, and Heracles responds with a narrative on the

28 The link between masculinity and military activity is constant in Late Antique panegyrics: when an emperor lacks military activity he can be extolled as head of the army or described donning armor and having a body disposed for toil: e.g., Men. Rh. 372.30–373.5; Themistius *Or.* 1.2a–b.

29 The connections of the episodes of Brongos, Staphylos, and Icarios have often been noted: Vian 1991, 589; Gerbeau and Vian 1992, 4, 13–14; Gerlaud 1994, 131–132; Fayant 2000, 12–13. For book 40, see Simon 1999, 149–150, 160.

30 Men. Rh. 375.5–10 "When you have finished with actions of war, you should proceed to a passage on peace. This you should divide under the headings of temperance, justice and wisdom. Under 'justice' you should commend mildness towards subjects, humanity towards petitioners and accessibility." On accessibility, see *Pan. Lat.* II (Pacatus, on Theodosius) 21.2 "you frequently emerge and you show yourself to the waiting people, and being willing not only to let yourself be seen, but to be approached readily, you listen to the entreaties of your subjects at close quarters" (Trans. Nixon and Rodgers 1994).

31 Analysis in Simon 2003, 142–149, and nn. ad loc.

TABLE 2.1

Figure	House	Meal	Reception	Gifts
Brongos (17.32–86)	D. arrives to Brongus' abode, a lonely hut (39), or cave (64–66). D. wonders at nature's skill (64–65)	42b–66 Brongus tries to sacrifice a sheep but D. detains him. Vegetarian meal	67–71 Brongus plays the syrinx and the *aulos* and pleases Dionysus	72–86 D. gives Brongus wine and teaches him to cultivate the vine
Staphylos (book 18)	Staphylos invites D. to his palace (described 67–86). D.'s wonder (87–92)	Rich banquet prepared (64–68, 93–99a), described and followed by dances (99b–153)	Speeches in panegyric mood (18–41, 217–224)	210–215 Staphylos gives D. a golden jar with silver cups, and rich robes
Heracles Astrochiton (40.366–578)	D. visits Heracles' temple, invoking the god with a hymn (369–410)	411–421 Meal of nectar and ambrosia	422–427 D.'s questions 428–573 Heracles narrates the story of Tyre, to D.'s delight (574–575)	576–578 D. gives Heracles a mixing bowl and he corresponds with a chiton
Icarios (47.34b–264)	34b–36 D. goes to the house of Icarios, who excels as a gardener	38b–34 Milk offered and refused by D., who offers wine	37–38a Icarios dances	41–57 D. gives wine to Icarios and 66–69 teaches him viticulture

foundation of Tyre (429–573), that sets up a model for Dionysus of how a god can intervene in human history as a benefactor. Despite the encomiastic background of all the episodes, only Staphylos relates to Dionysus with encomiastic speeches, thus presenting them as the appropriate form of communication of the (educated) upper class and royalty.

3 First Speech (*Dion.* 18.18–41)

Staphylos' first speech follows a very basic structure: appeal to Dionysus to visit his palace (18–19), adducing three episodes of hospitality related to his father Zeus,[32] two perverse ones (20–24a Lycaon serves his son Nyctimos to Zeus; 24b–30 Tantalos kills his son and serves him for dinner) and an appropriate one (35–38 Macello entertains Zeus and Apollo and is later rewarded for her hospitality),[33] and a final invitation to visit his house (39–41).

πρὸς Διὸς Ἱκεσίοιο, τεοῦ, Διόνυσε, τοκῆος,
πρὸς Σεμέλης θεόπαιδος, ἐμὸν μὴ δῶμα παρέλθῃς.
Ἔκλυον, ὡς ὑπέδεκτο τεὸν γενετῆρα Λυκάων,
αὐτὸν ὁμοῦ μακάρεσσι, καὶ υἱέα χειρὶ δαΐξας
Νύκτιμον ἀγνώσσοντι τεῷ παρέβαλλε τοκῆι,
καὶ Διὶ παμμεδέοντι μιῆς ἔψαυσε τραπέζης,
Ἀρκαδίης παρὰ πέζαν. Ὑπὲρ Σιπύλου δὲ καρήνων
Τάνταλος, ὡς ἐνέπουσι, τεὸν ξείνισσε τοκῆα,
δαιτρεύσας δ᾽ ἑὸν υἷα θεοῖς παρέθηκεν ἐδωδήν·
καὶ Πέλοπος πλατὺν ὦμον, ὅσον θοινήσατο Δηώ,
μορφώσας ἐλέφαντι, νόθῳ τεχνήμονι κόσμῳ,
υἱέα δαιτρευθέντα πάλιν ζώγρησε Κρονίων,
ἔμπαλιν ἀλλήλοις μεμερισμένα γυῖα συνάπτων.
Ἀλλὰ τί σοι, Διόνυσε, Λυκάονα παιδοφονῆα
ξεινοδόκον μακάρων καὶ Τάνταλον ἠεροφοίτην
νεκταρέων ὀνόμηνα δολόφρονα φῶρα κυπέλλων,
δήιον ἀμβροσίης καὶ νέκταρος ἄνδρα πιφαύσκων;
Ζῆνα καὶ Ἀπόλλωνα μιῇ ξείνισσε ⟨τραπέζῃ⟩
Μακελλώ·
καὶ Φλεγύας ὅτε πάντας ἀνερρίζωσε θαλάσσης
νῆσον ὅλην τριόδοντι διαρρήξας Ἐνοσίχθων,
ἀμφοτέρας ἐφύλαξε καὶ οὐ πρήνιξε τριαίνῃ.
Καὶ σύ, φέρων μίμημα τεοῦ ξενίοιο τοκῆος,
ἐς μίαν ἠριγένειαν ἐμῶν ἐπίβηθι μελάθρων·
δὸς χάριν ἀμφοτέροις, καὶ Βότρυϊ καὶ γενετῆρι.

32 Comparing behaviors is a frequent encomiastic strategy: Theon *Prog.* 111.1–3 "It is not without utility also to make mention of those already honoured, comparing their deeds to those of the persons being praised"; Hermog. 17.3–4 "The best source of argument in encomia is derived from comparisons, which you will utilize as the occasion may suggest" (translations from Kennedy 2003); Men. Rh. 389.12–27.

33 See analysis in Gerbeau and Vian 1992, 9–11.

> [18] In the name of Zeus the suppliant's god, your own father, Dionysos, in the name of Semele the young god's mother, disregard not my house! I have heard how Lycaon entertained your father himself with the Blessed, how he cut up his son Nyctimos with his own hand and served him up to your father unknowing and touched one table with Zeus Almighty, in the land of Arcadia.
>
> [24b] Again, on the heads of Sipylos, I have heard how Tantalos received your father as his guest, butchered his own son and set him before the gods at dinner; how Cronion fitted together again the separated limbs and restored to life the butchered son, replacing the broad shoulder of Pelops—the only part which Deo had eaten—by a makeshift artificial shape of ivory.
>
> [31] But why, Dionysos, have I named to you Lycaon the Sonmurderer who entertained the Blessed, or Tantalos visitor of the skies, who planned the crafty theft of the cups of nectar—why mention the ravisher of nectar and ambrosia? Macello entertained Zeus and Apollo at one table … and when Earthshaker had shattered the whole island with his trident and rooted all the Phlegyans at the bottom of the sea, he saved both women and did not strike them down with the trident.
>
> [39] Do you now follow the example of your Father the Friend of Guests: enter my mansion for one day. Grant this grace to us both, to Botrys and to his father.

Staphylos' approach to Dionysus is ambivalent: on the one hand he recognizes the divinity of his host (*Dion.* 18.18–19, 39) and mentions his earlier battles (*Dion.* 18.1–7a), but on the other he advises Dionysus on what he thinks would be the right course of action, as if the god needed guidance. Staphylos seems to be following the model of Nestor advising Telemachus in the *Odyssey*,[34] presenting himself as a worthy counselor, in contrast with Dionysus' youth. Staphylos acts as a panegyrist whose subject of praise is young and has not proved his qualities yet, due to which the panegyrist is reduced to recollect the behavior of his father or other family members as a model. This is what Claudian does, e.g., in *IV. Cons* 18–48 mentioning that Honorius belongs to the house of Tra-

34 Note the structure of the Homeric episode: *Od.* 3.1–66 (reception), 67–101 (questions about Neoptolemus' identity), 102–200 (Nestor's speech), 201–403 (more speeches, dinner, bed), 404–486 (following morning, after a sacrifice of propitiation, Nestor sees Telemachus off to Menelaus; *xenia* on departure). Homer contrasts Nestor's experience and knowledge with Telemachus' present lack of both, but notes at the same time that Telemachus takes after his father (3.123b–125).

jan, his grandfather, the senior military officer Theodosius, and his father the emperor Theodosius. Technically, Nonnus seems to be fitting the speech to one of the types of the encomium on arrival (ἐπιβατήριος λόγος):[35] when a new governor arrives, since he has not had the time to have actions to relate, Menander advises to consider the actions of his family, hoping that he will meet the family standards, and to compare his family with one of great repute such as the Heraclids or the Aeacids (379.5–19, 380.9–25).

Staphylos' speech is contrasted with that of his wife Methe (*Dion.* 19.23–41), when Dionysus returns to their palace and she has already experienced Dionysus' benevolence. Dionysus now fits the type of the returning governor: Methe does not propose family paradigms for him to imitate, but dwells on the regular topics of joy at the arrival of the governor, light imagery and contrast between the darkness of the past and the joy/light brought by the governor (19.23–27a).[36]

Ἦλθες ἐμοί, φίλε Βάκχε, φίλον φάος· οὐκέτ᾽ ἀνίη,
οὐκέτι πένθος ἔχει με Διωνύσοιο φανέντος·
ἦλθες ἐμοί, φίλε Βάκχε, φίλον φάος·ὑμετέρῳ γάρ
δάκρυον ἐπρήυνα ποτῷ παιήονος οἴνου.
Οὐ πόσιν, οὐ πατέρος στενάχω μόρον …

> You have come to me, dear Bacchos, as a great light! Grief holds me no more, pain no more, now Dionysos has appeared! You have come to me, dear Bacchos, as a great light; for by your potion of healing wine I have quieted my tears. I mourn no more for husband, no more for a father's death.

The main elements in this speech (i.e., new arrival as a source of joy and light, which puts an end to the crying for missing relatives) occur in earlier verse

35 Compare Dewar 1996, xxvii–xxix, on Claudian *VI Cons. Hon.* as a hybrid of βασιλικὸς and ἐπιβατήριος λόγος.

36 Men. Rh. 378.9–12 "If it is the arrival of a governor, you should say at once: 'With fortunate omens have you come from the emperor, brilliant as a ray of the sun that appears to us on high'," 378.16–26 "After this proemium, you come to the passage about the subjects … In one, you should give a vivid portrayal of the situation in which they were badly treated by the previous governor, and amplify their hardships, not however speaking ill of the predecessor, but simply reporting the subjects' misfortune. Then go on: 'When night and darkness covered the world, you were seen like the sun, and at once dissolved all the difficulties'," 381.24–27 "If we are making an arrival speech for a governor who has ruled the nation for a long time but has only lately visited our own city, we must adopt the same topics of joy, as described," 382.1–4.

encomia extant on papyrus, of which the best example is the encomium on Diocletian in *P.Oxy*. 63.4352 fr. 5.ii, lines 18–25 (Miguélez-Cavero 2008, cat. no. 17; dated to the third century AD):[37]

Ζε̣ὺ̣ϲ μόγιϲ οἰκτείραϲ γενεὴν Καπιτώλιοϲ ἀν[δρῶν
κοιρανίην πάϲηϲ τραφερῆϲ πάϲηϲ τε θαλάϲϲ̣η̣[ϲ
ὤπαϲεν ἀντιθέωοι Διοκλητιανῶι βαϲιλῆ̣ϊ̣.
μνημοσύνην δ̣᾽ ἀ̣χέων προτέρων ϲβ̣έ̣ϲ̣ε̣[ν εἴ τιϲ ἔτ᾽ αἰνοῖϲ
μοχθί̣ζει δεσμοῖϲιν ἀφεγγέοϲ ἔνδοθι χ[ώ]ρ̣[ου.
ἀλλὰ πατὴρ μὲν παῖ̣δα, γυνή θ̣᾽ ἑὸν ἄνδρα λ̣ύ̣θ̣έ̣[νταϲ
εἰϲοράα̣ καὶ γνωτὸϲ ἀδελφεὸν οἷα μολόνταϲ̣[
εἰϲ φάοϲ ἠ`ε´λίοιο τὸ δεύτερον ἐξ Ἀΐδαο …

Capitoline Zeus took pity at last on the human race and gave the lordship of all the earth and all the sea to godlike king Diocletian. He extinguished the memory of former griefs for any still suffering in grim bonds in a lightless place. Now a father sees his child, a wife her husband, a brother his brother released, as if coming into the light of the sun a second time from Hades … [Greek text and English translation of the *ed.pr.*],

And in Triphiodorus' *Sack of Troy* (third century AD), as part of Priam's self-congratulation on the arrival of the Wooden Horse into Troy (424–426a, 430–431):[38]

Ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡμετέρῃσιν ἐπαχνυμένη θαλίῃσιν
ἤλυθες, ὁππότε πᾶσιν ἐλεύθερον ἦμαρ ἀνῆψεν
ἡμῖν Ζεὺς Κρονίδης

But you have come with grief to our festivities, when Zeus Cronides kindled for us all the day of freedom.

οὐ μήτηρ ἐπὶ παιδὶ κινύρεται, οὐδ᾽ ἐπὶ δῆριν
ἄνδρα γυνὴ πέμψασα νέκυν δακρύσατο χήρη.

37 For the topic of light see also *BKT* 9.56 (Miguélez-Cavero 2008, cat. no. 56). For the topic of joy, see also *PSI* 2.149v line 27 (Miguélez-Cavero 2008, cat. no. 23).

38 I noted the parallelism between these two passages and the structuring of the wooden horse scene as an *adventus* complete with a welcome speech in Miguélez-Cavero 2013, 301–304, 352–357.

> The mother does not mourn her child, nor does the wife who sent her husband to battle weep over his dead body, now a widow.

The comparison of books 18 and 19 of the *Dionysiaca* with the scene in Triphiodorus can be taken further:

- *Dion.* 18.1–4 Fama as herald of the name of Dionysus, his battle against the Indians and his fruit of the vine (… Φήμη /…/ οὔνομα κηρύσσουσα κορυμβοφόρου Διονύσου / καὶ θρασὺν Ἰνδὸν ἄρηα καὶ ἀγλαόβοτρυν ὀπώρην) ≈ Triphiodorus 235–237 Fama as a messenger of the flight of the Achaeans (ἤλυθε Φήμη / δήιον ἀγγέλλουσα φόβον).
- *Dion.* 18.15–17 Staphylos adopts the posture of the suppliant on approaching Dionysus and his chariot ≈ Triphiodorus 262–264 Sinon adopts the posture of the suppliant on approaching Priam, who has arrived to the Trojan plain on a chariot.
- Staphylos articulates his speech as a supplication to Zeus the protector of suppliants (18.18 πρὸς Διὸς Ἱκεσίοιο, τεοῦ, Διόνυσε, τοκῆος) ≈ Sinon in Triphiodorus 278 (Ἀλλά, μάκαρ, πεφύλαξο Διὸς σέβας Ἱκεσίοιο).
- *Dion.* 18.18–41, 19.23–41 Arrival speeches by Staphylos and Methe ≈ Reception of the horse in Troy, with confronted speeches by Cassandra and Priam over the entrance of the Wooden Horse in the citadel (Triphiodorus 359–443).
- Staphylos' use of two negative examples (Lycaon and Tantalos) sounds strange from a rhetorical point of view,[39] but would make sense in a mythological context: Dionysus could choose to misbehave as other mythological characters had done. Compare the episode of the Wooden Horse in Triphiodorus: in his first speech (265–282) Sinon presents Priam with two referents of hospitality, either pleasing Zeus *Hikesios* or treating him as the Achaeans have done before with him, Achilles, Philoctetes, and Palamedes.

Triphiodorus and the *P.Oxy.* 63.4352 prove that already in the third century AD a panegyric element was included in epic (e.g., in Triphiodorus' poem) and panegyrics could be written in epic verses (as is the case with the encomium on Diocletian). We do not need to consider Triphiodorus as a direct influence over Nonnus here: by the fifth century AD Nonnus was simply building upon generic expectations.

39 E.g., Theon *Prog.* 112.30–113.2 "First, let it be specified that *syncrises* are not comparisons of things having a great difference between them: for someone wondering whether Achilles or Thersites was braver would be laughable. Comparison should be of likes and where we are in doubt which should be preferred because of no evident superiority of one to the other."

4 Second Speech (*Dion.* 18.210–305)

Dionysus is entertained by Staphylos and his family with a banquet presented as a Dionysiac *komos* with endless consumption of wine, music of Bacchic instruments and drunken dances (93–153).[40] After the banquet, upon the arrival of the night they all go to sleep (154–165). Dionysus dreams of Lycurgus during the night (166–195) and wakes up in the morning ready to go to battle against the Indians (196–201). After giving him the accustomed *xenia* (210–215—note 211 ξεινήια δῶρα), Staphylos pronounces a farewell speech related to several epic and rhetorical models. The main epic models are Homeric command speeches from a senior figure to encourage and guide younger fighters, in particular the speeches of Nestor[41] and Phoenix,[42] but these elderly men tend to reminiscence about their own experiences, not to propose the lives of others as exempla to back up their suggestions.

From a rhetorical point of view, Staphylos could fit here an apopemptic hymn (i.e., that pronounced on the departure of a god),[43] but he does not

40 Wine is not presented as Dionysus' gift to Staphylos, although the next day Staphylos will give Dionysus an amphora in which he used to drink goat milk before (18.212–213) and although, after Staphylos' death, his wife Methe asks Dionysus to provide her with wine to ease her pain (19.5–16).

41 *Il.* 1.254–284 Nestor attempts to resolve the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon (1.254–258 introduction: the Trojans will be happy when they hear about the quarrel; 259–274 listen to me, just as the heroes of the past did, 275–284 advice to Agamemnon and Achilles); 7.124–160 he urges the heroes to confront Hector (7.124–131 grief has come to Achaea, Peleus would grieve if he heard that the Achaeans are cowering before Hector; 132–158 I wish I were young again to fight Hector; 159–160 now go and fight Hector); 11.656–762 Nestor tries to persuade Patroclus to return to the fighting in Achilles' place (11.656–669 why does Achilles take pity of the Achaeans struck in combat but does not intervene?; 670–759a I wish I were young again; 759b–790a I recruited Achilles and yourself for the war and Peleus asked you to advise Achilles wisely; 790b–803 if Achilles does not want to go back to battle, ask him to send you in his place).

42 *Il.* 9.434–605 Phoenix tries to persuade Achilles not to leave Troy (9.434–443 why have you decided to leave?; 444–495 I left Hellas, fleeing from my father, and Peleus received me in Phthia, where I reared Achilles; 496–512 master your spirit, just as the gods are able to change their mind if appeased; 513–526 honor bends the minds of noble men and Agamemnon offers you gifts to appease you; 527–599 the great warriors of the past were also appeased; 600–605 accept the gifts).

43 Men. Rh. 333.10–11 "Apopemptic hymns are like some that are found in Bacchylides, containing a valediction [*apopompe*] as though on the occasion of a departure abroad" and 336.9–11 "Such hymns are delivered over actual or supposed departures of god, like what are called the departures of Apollo at Delos or Miletus and of Artemis at Argos," and treated *in extenso* in 333.5–23.

include the usual topics of this speech: celebration of the place the god is leaving and prayer for a second visit. A propemptic talk, i.e., a speech which speeds its subject on his journey with commendation (Men. Rh. 295.2–26), does not seem relevant here, but Menander's advice is, in the sense that he mentions three possible situations: 1. a superior sending off an inferior, e.g., a teacher and a student (who admits advice); 2. two friends (protestations of love); 3. inferior to superior (it becomes an encomium). Although Staphylos and Dionysus would have fit into 2 and 3, the speech seems to reflect a situation type 1.

Again Staphylos' speech has a clear structure:[44]

- Dionysus should equal his father Zeus and his brothers with his warlike exploits (217–218; the exhortation is repeated in 265, 268, 273).
- 218b–234 Exemplum 1: Gigantomachy, relying on the earlier narrative of Zeus' fight against Typhon in *Dion.* 1–2. Zeus' defeat of the Titans born of the Earth ≈ Dionysus' called to defeat the Indians born of the Earth (218b–221a). Zeus, lord of the celestial fire (233–234) ≈ Dionysus as lord of the fire, fight against the Hydaspes (books 23–24).
- 235–264 Exemplum 2: Zeus defeated Campe, a feminine double of Typhon. Campe is compared to the monstrous elephants with which the Indians fight (235–237).
- 265–272 Exemplum 3: Zeus defeated the giant Indos, compared to Deriades (272).
- 273–289a Exemplum 4: Ares defeated the giant son of Echidna. Both Ares' spear and Dionysus' thyrsus are stained with the blood of the enemies defeated (286–288). Disconnected: Dionysus' exploits are of a similar standing to Apollo's (289a).
- 289b–305 Exemplum 5: Perseus. Staphylos has entertained both Perseus and Dionysus (289b–290); both had just left Cydnos (292–293a); Perseus carries the head of the Gorgon Medusa, Dionysus the thyrsus (295–297); Perseus killed the monster that assaulted Andromeda by the Erythraean Sea and Dionysus defeated the Erythraean Indians (298–299). Transition from comparison of past events to Perseus' feats and Dionysus' future deeds: call to slay Deriades, who is worse than Perseus' *ketos* (300–301a); call to save Justice, the Astral Virgin, superior to the mortal virgin Andromeda Perseus has saved (301b–305).

Staphylos bases this speech, as he did the previous one, on the expectations of Dionysus' future feats, which he makes equivalent to those of earlier members of his family: exempla 1–4 are distant historical events and for exempla 1–3

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44 Full commentary in Gerbeau and Vian 1992, 22–36.

Staphylos relies on the narrative that his grandfather Belos transmitted to his own father, from whom he heard it (*Dion.* 18.222–224). He adds up exemplum 5, as his personal (present) experience.[45] The equivalence between the distant mythological past exemplified by heroic and divine fights against monsters (Typhon, Campe, Indos, the son of Echidna) and a present that is mythologized with the comparison (the war against the Indians), was theorized by Menander Rhetor (see n. 20), and appeared frequently in Statius' panegyrics[46] and in Claudian.[47]

Take Claudian's panegyric on Honorius' sixth consulate. In the proem, the poet remembers a dream in which he was in the citadel of heaven and laid his poetry on the Gigantomachy at the feet of Jupiter (*Praef.* 17–18): *Enceladus mihi carmen erat victusque Typhoeus / (hic subit Inarimen, hunc gravis Aetna domat)*, "I sang of Enceladus and the defeat of Typhoeus (the one a prisoner beneath Inarime, the other oppressed by the weight of Etna)."[48] The poet wakes up and sees his dream becoming true (*Praef.* 21–22): *Additur ecce fides nec me mea lusit imago, / Inrita ne falsum somnia misit ebur* ("See, my vision is confirmed; it was no delusion, nor has the false gate of Ivory sent forth unaccomplished dreams"); ostensibly because he is going to sing of emperor Honorius as a Jupiter-like vanquisher of the Giant-like Goths, but also self-referentially because Claudian is the author both of a Latin and a Greek Gigantomachy.[49] The Gigantomachy (and related myths such as the Titanomachy and Typhonomachy) had come to stand for the ideal epic plot, especially in contexts of *recusatio*,[50] and Claudian toys with the differences between writing an epic gigantomachy and its use in comparisons in a panegyric on future exploits. Staphylos also hopes that Dionysus will become a proper subject for a royal encomium defeating his real enemies, the Indians, who would be loosely comparable with the subjects of different gigantomachies.

The model of the speech Staphylos addresses to Dionysus (a form of rhetorical propemptic talk to a living, mortal individual) precludes Staphylos from narrating the epic titanomachies performed by Dionysus. A good point of comparison would be Teiresias' speech to Pentheus, singing the glories of Dionysus as a god, including how he punished the Tyrrhenian pirates and defeated the

45 Gerbeau and Vian 1992, 35.

46 Coleman 1999; Hinds 2000.

47 Coombe 2015.

48 Trans. Platnauer 1922.

49 Dewar 1996, n. ad loc. *Praef.* 17–18; Hinds 2013, 180–181.

50 Hinds 2013, 180; Hardie 1986, 85–90 (chapters of Gigantomachy in the *Aeneid*, pp. 85–156). Tsai 2007, 42, notes that gigantomachic imageries, in their historical context "also play upon Late Antique anxieties about the barbarian threat to peace and civilization."

giants (45.96–215). Staphylos differentiates between the role of the epic poet as an epic singer of Zeus' gigantomachies (the role Nonnus adopts in *Dion.* 1–2, Zeus' defeat of Typhoeus) and his own role as a panegyrist who can only use the gigantomachies as a means of comparison with weaker subjects. On the contrary, when Nonnus presents us with the main comparison of Dionysus and his brothers, despite advertising that he is embarking in a rhetorical section of comparison (the main comparison of the *basilikos logos*), he plays the epic poet and narrates the epic deeds of Dionysus together with his defeat of the Indians (25.27b–28): ἀλλὰ νέοισι καὶ ἀρχεγόνοισιν ἐρίζων / εὐκαμάτους ἱδρῶτας ἀναστήσω Διονύσου ("But I will set up the toils and sweat of Dionysos in rivalry with both new and old").

The boundaries between epic and encomium were porous, and Nonnus makes a (meta)literary use of this porosity. As a panegyrist, Staphylos has a clear idea of what he can and cannot do, he follows along the usual lines of propaganda and does not exceed the limits imposed by his rhetorical models. He seems to succeed as Dionysus is spurred into action, wishing to rival his father by defeating the Indians (19.306–313a), but the development of the episode rereads the panegyric paradigm under a parodic light.

In the first place, despite the effect Staphylos' speech has on Dionysus, its immediate consequences are discreet: Dionysus sends a messenger to Deriades compelling him to choose between allegiance and war (18.313b–322a) and enjoys an Assyrian tour, during which he spreads the cultivation of the vine and wine consumption (18.322b–326). Then he returns to Staphylos' palace expecting to be entertained again (334–336). Second, to celebrate the life of Staphylos Dionysus organizes funerary games in his honor, starting with a musical contest (19.59–117). Erechtheus, whose song in Athenian style (both because it includes an Athenian myth and because of the prolixity characteristic of the Athenians) is reported in indirect speech (19.80–96), produces a standard encomium of Staphylos and Dionysus: he narrates how Celeus, his son Triptolemus, and his wife Metanira receive Demeter in their home, for which they are recompensed with the gift of wheat and its cultivation to Triptolemus and with Demeter personally consoling him and Metanira after Celeus' death; then he establishes a comparison with how Staphylos, Botrys, and Methe host Dionysus and are rewarded for it. The performance is described as appropriate, well-adapted to the situation (99 ἅρμενον ... Ἀτθίδα μολπήν). The use of the exemplum and its comparison with the present situation brings Erechtheus' performance close to Staphylos' speeches. However, it is the second contestant, Oiagros, who wins the prize with a laconic distich (19.104–105): εὐχαίτην Ὑάκινθον ἀνεζώγρησεν Ἀπόλλων, / καὶ Στάφυλον Διόνυσος ἀεὶ ζώοντα τελέσσει ("Apollo recalled to life his long-haired Hyacinthos: / Staphylos will be made to live forever by Dionysos").

Again an exemplum (Apollo and Hyacinthos), again a comparison of Dionysus and Staphylos with an earlier mythical event, but the concision of the winning composition reveals that the success of Staphylos' prolixity does not survive him: the official panegyrist is dead, long live the new panegyrist (and his new style).[51]

5 Conclusions

The *Dionysiaca* thus provides a good space to observe Late Antique genres as living constructs at play. Nonnus plays on encomiastic epic as an occasional genre (i.e., one used regularly in a concrete practical situation, such as the reception of an emperor-like figure, limited by a series of genre constraints) and as a free-standing genre, liberated from routine obligations. The latter is pressed on as an argument to present the *Dionysiaca* as high-brow literature, the former signals the connection of the poem with contemporary institutional poetry.

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51 Compare Heather 2010, on the competition for closeness to the emperor and performing imperial panegyrics as suffered by Themistius.

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CHAPTER 3

Aura's Metamorphosis in the *Dionysiaca* of Nonnus: A Tale of Classical and Christian Resonances

Anna Lefteratou

This chapter explores the theme of metamorphosis in Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* from a Christian point of view.[1] In it, I examine the final and most powerful metamorphosis of the *Dionysiaca*, that of the tecnophagus Aura into *a locus amoenus*. Aura is the last victim of Dionysus' desire after she offends her patroness and companion Artemis by boasting about her manly breasts, compared to the goddess' feminine looks. At Artemis' request, her punishment results in the loss of her virginity and metamorphosis: Aura is tricked into drinking water turned into somniferous wine; the god ties her up and rapes her while she is asleep. Upon awakening she finds herself pregnant with twins that she delivers in a delirium of pain, after which, in a fit of madness, she repeatedly attempts to kill her babies. Artemis saves one of the twins, Iacchus, whom she entrusts to the nymph Nicaea, another consort of Dionysus, to become the founder of the Eleusinian Mysteries together with Nicaea's daughter Telete. Then, the maddened Aura throws herself into a stream. Only after this horrid ending is Dionysus dispatched to Olympus to reclaim his position in the pantheon at the poem's finale. This is indeed a startling ending to the poem, since its gruesome details might have been dispensable for narrating the birth of the third Dionysus, Iacchus, which is important for the myth but which is described rather sketchily when compared with Aura's seduction narrative.[2]

One question arising from this narrative distribution is the following: does Aura's transformation qualify as a punitive metamorphosis narrative, as

1 Cf. also *Dion.* 27.174 μετάτροπον ὕμνον; Fauth 1981; Hopkinson 1994, 10–11; Shorrock 2011, 73; for Proteus' function in the epic, see also Baumbach 2013. For the Christian, and especially medieval reworking of metamorphosis, see Barkan 1986 and Bynum 1995, whose observations have been important for my interpretation of Aura's transformation.

2 Buxton 2009, 145 highlights the difficulties imposed on the sensibilities of the reader by such a brutal closure; Hadjittofi 2016, 127 suggests that book 48 mirrors book 1. For Aura's tale as the culmination of the *Dionysiaca*, see Schmiel 1993; for rape and the subversion of the Hellenistic and/or erotic poetics, see Hadjittofi 2008; for procreation as one of the major themes of the epic, see Gigli Piccardi 1985, 109–111, 228–229 and Hadjittofi 2016, 151.

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Schmiel 1993 reads it, or an escapist one?[3] Alternatively, is her metamorphosis some new kind of hybrid, which is meant to be read against and not according to the classical *topos* of metamorphosis? Or is it a cadenza meant as an impressionistic Nonnian thriller?[4] Below, I argue that the story is not a typical tale of metamorphosis of the Hellenistic or imperial kind. Instead its depiction of Aura's bodily transformation might be better understood if examined within the cultural milieu of Christian Late Antiquity.[5] In order to show this, I will set Aura's tale against the classical and Christian models:[6] accordingly, the first part of the article compares Aura's transformation with the classical myths dealing with rape/seduction, metamorphosis, *hybris*, and cannibalism that are embedded or alluded to in the poem, both intra- and inter-textually.[7] The second part surveys the Christian resonances of Aura's transformation and focuses on the ideological reception of pregnant bodies in Late Antique Christianity. In conclusion, I suggest, Aura's metamorphosis needs to be read in the light of the poetics of classicizing metamorphosis and also with a focus on the particular ideological and religious Christian representations of the female body.

1 Classical Metamorphosis Tales Surrounding Aura

If we were to read Aura's transformation into a stream apart from the earlier narrative of her *hybris* against Artemis, excruciating childbirth, and her infanticide, it might have prompted an association with similar metamorphosis narratives. Like other virginal nymphs who have been seduced by a god in Greek

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3 Schmiel 1993, 176. For metamorphosis as escape, see Buxton 2009, 63.

4 Keydell 1932, 199 believed the birth of the twin boys to be a superfluous incident in the episode, whereas Vian 2003, 78 argued that its presence is necessary for maintaining both the etymology of the mountain Dindymon and the myth's necessity for only one third Dionysus, Iacchus, to survive.

5 Agosti 2013, 85–92, for example, explores the possibility that Nonnus' audience was aware of the violence of religious fights in Alexandria and mentions the ritual sacrifice of babies of Christians in the temple of the god Kothos, close to Panopolis, as a background for the treatment of infanticide in the epic.

6 For the trend of investigating Christian themes in the *Dionysiaca* and pagan themes in the *Paraphrase*, see now Shorrock 2016; Spanoudakis 2016. For Dionysus as foreshadowing Jesus, see Chuvin 2014. See also the very influential analysis in Spanoudakis 2007, 2014.

7 For instance, the myth of Agaue is revisited in Nonnus' *Pentheid*; when it appears in the tale of Aura it constitutes not only an intertextual Euripidean backdrop but an intratextual reference to Nonnus' own revision. By contrast the Medea myth that features in the Aura episode is only an intertextual allusion. For narratological approaches to classics, see e.g., de Jong 2004; Rengakos and Grethlein 2009; for intratextuality, see Sharrock and Morales 2000. For narratology in Nonnus see now Geisz 2018 and Verhelst 2016.

myth, Aura is transformed into a locus amoenus—beautiful but reminiscent of her rape too (*Dion.* 48.928–948):

> After the bed of Bromios, after the delirium of childbirth, huntress Aura would escape the reproach of her wedding, for she still held in reverence the modesty of her maiden state. So she went to the banks of Sangarius, threw into the water her back-bending bow and her neglected quiver, and leaped headlong into the deep stream (καὶ βυθίῳ προκάρηνος ἐπεσκίρτησε ῥεέθρῳ), refusing in shame to let her eyes look on the light of days. The waves of the river covered her up, and Cronion turned her into a fountain (εἰς κρήνην μετάμειψεν): her breasts became the spouts of falling water (μαζοὶ κρουνὸς ἔην), the stream was her body, the flowers her hair, her bow the horn of the horned River-god in bull-shape, the bowstring changed into a rush and the whistling arrows into vocal reeds, the quiver passed through to the muddy bed of the river and, changed to a hollow channel, poured its sounding waters. Then the Archeress stilled her anger. She went about the forest seeking for traces of Lyaeus in his beloved mountains, while she held Aura's new-born baby (i.e. Iacchus).[8]

Aura's tale partially resembles that of other unwillingly transformed nymphs in Nonnus' epic, such as Callisto, Daphne, and Syrinx, whose metamorphoses contribute to the etiology of yet another plant, another natural element, or phenomenon. But for a reader well versed in classical myth, Aura's metamorphosis into a stream does not altogether map onto the myths of the above-mentioned maidens, since her name and her new shape fail the reader's expectations. Aura's name, according to the poem's etymology of it, associates her with the swift mountain breeze and the ethereal elements, so that the outcome of her metamorphosis ought to have been: "like her doings, Aura the Wind-maid could run most swiftly, keeping pace with the highland winds."[9]

Many scholars have interpreted Aura's aquatic metamorphosis as a motif transposed from a myth originally belonging to Nicaea, who in some sources, but not in the *Dionysiaca*, is transformed into a pond.[10] In the *Etymolog-*

8 All translations of the *Dionysiaca* are by W.H.D. Rouse; translations of other texts, if not otherwise stated, are my own.

9 *Dion.* 48.255–256 ἐπωνυμίῃ δὲ καὶ ἔργῳ ὀξύτατον δρόμον εἶχεν ὀρειάσι σύνδρομος αὔραις. Cf. Vian 1994, 201 n. 20: "elle accuse les 'brises de l'air' don't elle porte le nom avant de jeter 'en l'air' ses enfants pour les tuer." For the pastoral setting of violent episodes in Ovids Met. see e.g. Hinds 2002, 134–135. For Aura as a possible, yet subverted, Callisto see Hadjittofi 2008, 123.

10 See, e.g., Chuvin 1991, 163–165; Vian 1994, 204–205. For the sources of the Aura episode, see

icum Magnum Aura's tale provides the etiology for the mountain Dindymon in Phrygia.[11] In this version, and like other Callisto-like accounts, Aura is seduced/raped by Dionysus and becomes pregnant with twins. She comes to Cyzicus from Pontus and climbs up a mountain where she gives birth. The mountain-top, which presumably has two peaks, is named the Twin-Mountain, either after Aura's twin babies (Δίνδυμον—δίδυμα, "twins") or, according to other sources, after her two breasts.[12] The *lemma* in the *Etymologicum Magnum* does not mention any metamorphosis of Aura, least of all into a stream, but the *aetion* was surely known to Nonnus.[13] Thus, neither in the mythographical sources nor in the *Dionysiaca* does Aura become the mountain breeze that her name implies.[14]

1.1 *Virgins and Metamorphosis: Daphne*

This having been said, further analysis of the related Nonnian metamorphosis tales might provide a further hint as to how the external reader is expected to understand this account. One of the first embedded analogs for Aura's transformation is the famous story of Daphne. In Nonnus (*Dion.* 48.259–286), the huntress, tired, naps under a laurel tree and dreams of being hunted by Eros and Aphrodite in the guise of a lioness. Upon waking, Aura rebukes Daphne's dream, on the grounds that it does not befit an exemplary chaste virgin[15] such as her to inspire such dreams (*Dion.* 48.291–300):

> And so, Daphne, when you changed your shape you also changed your mind (ὧς ἄρα, Δάφνη, / σὸν δέμας ἀλλάξασα τεὸν νόον εὗρες ἀμεῖψαι)? Might it be that after your death you became the servant of conjugal Aphrodite? This is not a tree of a chaste girl but of a bride newlywed.

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also Accorinti 2012, 608–615, 736–737 with literature. The waters of Nicaea's pond, according to the legend, periodically turn into wine.

11 *Etym. Magn.* s.v. Δίνδυμον (p. 276.36): "she gives birth to twins; because of them the mountain was called Twin-Mountain." For an etymology based on Aura's two breasts, see *Schol.* ad. Ap. Rh. 1.985. For the *aition*, see Accorinti 2012, 609.

12 Cf. Vian 2003, 27, 75–81; Accorinti 2009, 77–78; 2012, 608–615, 736–737 with a detailed analysis of the sources. For oriental elements in Aura's tale, see Lightfoot 2000. For the breast-symbolism of mountains, see Wormhoud 1949; for breasts in Nonnus, see Newbold 2000.

13 *Dion.* 48.854. See also Accorinti 2012, 613, 727.

14 Aura's aquatic transformation has puzzled researchers: see, e.g., Vian 1994, 203; observes that her suicide and metamorphosis are anomalous, n. 30: "un personage peut soit se métamorphoser en cours d'eau, soit donner son nom au fleuve dans lequel il est tombé." *Contra*, Chuvin 1991, 167 n. 3, who observes that "l'aura est la brise qui monte de l'eau et on connaît un affluent de l'Istros nommé Auras."

15 *Dion.* 48.261 σαόφρονος Δάφνης.

In fact, the *Dionysiaca* stipulate a close association between these two virgins: for example, Daphne's flight from Apollo is described as being "swift like the breeze," in an allusion to Aura's very name.[16] Aura's rebuke of Daphne is suggestive of the subversive take on metamorphosis, and especially on Aura's pending transformation: just as Aura's name and her metamorphosed body are mutually exclusive, so are Daphne's celebrated chastity and her current role as a love messenger, at least in Aura's interpretation. Yet for the reader she is culpable not only for opposing Aphrodite but also for insulting Artemis.[17]

1.2 *Aquatic Metamorphosis: Rhodopis*

The oscillation between name and body is also highlighted in a comment made by Aura. Before her suicide Aura says she is "ashamed to have the name of bride who once was a virgin."[18] But in an ironic twist Aura's body even in death contradicts her virginal ideals. Moreover, her newly acquired aquatic body recalls those types of transformation that are more frequently reserved for mythical characters who have been *willingly* seduced by either a god or a mortal.[19] The aquatic body therefore stands in for the no longer virginal female body. One such characteristic case is that of the myth of Rhodopis found in Achilles Tatius' novel, a major intertext for the *Dionysiaca*. In this story, Rhodopis, a virgin huntress, and Euthynicus, a Hippolytus-like chaste hunter, engage in lovemaking in a cave. Artemis, upon learning of their misdeed, transforms "the girl into a stream, whereupon she lost her virginity."[20] Most surprisingly, the metamorphosed source in the novel becomes an accomplice of the illicit pair of lovers Melite and Clitophon, defying Artemis' punishment even in this

16 *Dion.* 48.258–286. For Daphne's virginity, cf. also *Dion.* 42.386, where Daphne is depicted as fleeing "swiftly like a breeze," alluding to Aura's own name; and 33.210–211, which runs "she told how the knees of that unwedded Nymph fled swift on the breeze (ἀνυμφεύτοιο ποδήνεμα γούνατα νύμφης), how she ran once from Phoebus quick as the north wind (Βορηίδι σύνδρομος αὔρῃ)." For the naming of Aura in *Dion.*, see 48.257 ὀρειάσι σύνδρομος αὔραις.

17 Hadjittofi 2008, 114 rightly notes that Nonnus' Aura and Nicaea are also murderesses, subverting thus further the classical theme of the raped yet innocent virgin huntress, that is now presented as punishment.

18 *Dion.* 48.905: αἰδέομαι μεθέπειν μετὰ παρθένον οὔνομα νύμφης.

19 Cf. Bachelard 1942, 132–152, 96: "l' eau qui est la patrie des nymphes vivantes, est aussi la patrie des nymphes mortes." On love and aquatic metamorphosis, see Forbes Irving 1990, 299–305, and, e.g., Ov. *Met.* 6.312 (Niobe), 7.371 (Hyrie), 15.547 (Egeria). On aquatic nymphs as symbols of purity, and as illustrating the feminine and socially accepted love, see Macrì 2012, with extensive bibliography.

20 Ach. Tat. 8.13.19: καὶ εἰς ὕδωρ λύει τὴν κόρην ἔνθα τὴν παρθενίαν ἔλυσε. This story is often used in comparisons of Nonnus and the novel: see, for example, Miguélez-Cavero 2016, 558–559, Hadjittofi 2008, 123.

form.[21] By helping the two lovers, Rhodopis thus becomes a posthumous advocate of *eros* and not of *sophrosyne*. Aura's body, accordingly, becomes a female *locus amoenus*, boycotting, even posthumously, the virginal ideals of Artemis.

1.3 *Transgression and Metamorphosis: Niobe*

Aura's tale not only echoes related nymph-seduction narratives but also recalls other mythical characters who are famous for their *hybris*: like Actaeon, Aura sees Artemis in her bath, but unlike the male hunter, she fondles the goddess' breasts and makes light of her feminine looks.[22] When the infuriated goddess requests Nemesis' help, the latter recalls various tales of arrogant male and female characters whom Artemis in the past has punished: Typhon, Orion, Otos, and Ephialtes, were all struck dead; Niobe, the only female and mother-figure among Nemesis' *exempla*, was turned into a mountain endlessly flowing streams of tears.[23] Artemis explicitly links Aura's wished-for punishment to Niobe's:[24] just as Niobe, the mother of twelve children, made light of Leto, the mother of twins, Aura (the, ironically, would-be mother of twins) makes light of Artemis' virginity. Like Leto's famous birth pangs inflicted on her by Hera, Nemesis punishes Aura with excruciating pains[25] before her aquatic metamorphosis.[26] These self-consciously repetitive narratives—as denoted by the adverb πάλιν[27]—are important at a meta-mythical and a metaliterary level, as they suggest to the seasoned reader that Aura will partly share the fate of her analogs too, and also that her own punishment will be something astonishing and terrifying.

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21 For the function of myth as readerly guide in the novel, see Lefteratou 2017a, 149–150. For the Christian impact on shaping the manly virgin see Hadjittofi 2008, 126–127.

22 For Aura's androgynous characteristics, see Schmiel 1993, 470–483, 480–481 on Aura and Actaeon. For Actaeon and Aura, cf. further *Dion.* 48.343 and 5.306, Accorinti 2012, 664; Miguélez-Cavero 2008, 175. For the Christian impact on shaping the manly virgin see Hadjittofi 2008, 126–127.

23 *Dion.* 48.406–408 "If some prolific wife provokes your mother Leto, let her weep for her children, another Niobe of stone. Why should not I make another stone on Sipylus?"

24 *Dion.* 48.431–436 "that I may see Aura's body transformed into stone immovable."

25 Cf. *H.Hom.Ap* 91–92, Leto's birth pangs were delayed for nine days. Aura *Dion.* 48.810.

26 *Dion.* 48.445–449 "You shall see her in the bed of a mountain stream weeping fountains of tears (δάκρυσι πηγαίοισιν ὀδυρομένην) for her maiden girdle." See also Accorinti 2012, 678 for the imagery of the fountain of water and fountain of tears, with further literature. For springs as the outcome of the flux of tears, see Buxton 2009, 196–197.

27 Cf. *Dion.* 48.394 (τίς πάλιν), 395 (τίς πάλιν), 399 (πάλιν ἔψαυσε), 403 (πάλιν θρασύς). For the text, see Accorinti 2012, 673.

1.4 *Cannibalism with Metamorphosis: Zagreus and Agaue*

Aura's cannibalism finds a further model in myths of *sparagmos* in which metamorphosis also plays a secondary role. For example, Zagreus, the first Dionysus, who is mentioned earlier in book 6 of the *Dionysiaca*, was torn into pieces and underwent a series of metamorphoses before his death at the hands of the Titans. Another example is the unborn Dionysus, who turns his mother Semele into a potentially menancing maenad,[28] her throat imitating the sounds of animals and musical instruments around her. Aura too exhibits a similar murderous intent toward her Dionysian children.[29] In *Dionysiaca* 48.921–924, Aura kills and swallows one of her newborn, who is presumably no longer alive but nevertheless whole, a detail contrasting Zagreus' earlier dismemberment by the Titans. But whereas in the tale about Zagreus we learn that the Dionysian infant transformed itself into various shapes, in Aura's case it is the mother who is later transformed.[30] Furthermore, the repetition of the family bonds between the two—φίλῳ λαιμῷ, φίλα δεῖπνα—alludes to other accounts of *sparagmos* and filicide: Tereus' *sparagmos* of Itys,[31] results in the metamorphosis of the whole family; Cronos';[32] or that of Agaue, who kills Pentheus believing him to be a deer;[33] and Medea's murder of her two children.[34] Yet unlike Agaue and more like Medea, Aura acts consciously, albeit in rage,[35] and still, unlike Medea, not only does she kill her offspring but also consumes them, something unthinkable of myth's most famous filicides.[36]

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28 Cf. Chuvin 1992, 152–154, on Zagreus' and Dionysus' metamorphoses: 6.176 πολυσπερές εἶδος ἀμείβων; 8.6–34, Semele. On the metamorphosis of the maenad, see Fauth 1981, 113; Buxton 2009, 149. See also, Gigli Piccardi 1985, 217 on the metaliterary function of *poikilia* in this episode. For Nonnus' Zagreus and the Underworld, see now Otlewska-Jung 2017, who discusses the poem's mythical, Neoplatonic, and Christian models, as well as Bernabé and García-Casco 2016.

29 For Aura and the Titans, see Lightfoot 2000, 296.

30 *Dion.* 6.172–176 ἀλλοφυὴς μορφοῦτο πολυσπερὲς εἶδος ἀμείβων. Buxton 2009, 148 says: "Zagreus is killed and chopped up by the Titans and then appears 'in another shape and changed into many forms' (πολυσπερὲς εἶδος, 6.176), including that of a bull, in which form the Titans eventually kill him again." Some of these ideas on rebirth were also mentioned by Hadjittofi 2013.

31 According to Vian 2003, 209, the passage here echoes Tereus' cannibalism that is described earlier at *Dion.* 44.269. For the verbal similarities between 44.296 and 48.923, see Accorinti 2012, 735.

32 *Dion.* 2.334–335.

33 Cf. Fauth 1981, 127–128.

34 For Medea, see Simon 2004, on *Dion.* 44.266; cf. E. *Med.* 850, 1346. See also Geisz 2017, 75.

35 Cf. Vian 2003, 77 n. 2 on ποδὶ φοιταλέῳ as suggestive of Aura's folly.

36 Cf. Paus. 1.14.3, Hyg. *Fab.* 38; Alope, the daughter of Cercyon, was seduced by Poseidon and gave birth in secret to a baby boy, who was exposed twice. Alope was transformed

This brief survey of the manifold embedded models for Aura's account shows Nonnus' subversive take on classical myths, which are combined in such a way as to maximize the impression of the oxymoron: a mother consuming her own newborn child that she brought forth with horrific birth pangs.[37] These parallel classical mythical episodes provide both inter- and (principally) intra-textual models for Aura's story and also indicate that, in depicting her virginity, *hybris*, madness, and infanticide, the Nonnian narrator builds up and subverts a long tradition of male and mainly female metamorphosis analogs. From Daphne to Rhodope, from Niobe to Medea and Agaue or Philomela, the story of Aura is read alongside and mostly against the traditional narratives, since none of these myths does justice to the kind of ending that this epic poem reserves for Aura.

1.5 *Christian Transformations from Within: From Cannibalism to Eucharist*

Whereas mythical intertexts are important for understanding the twist on classical mythology prompted by the *Dionysiaca*, the uniqueness of the tale of Aura might become more tangible if examined through the Christian lens too. Metamorphosis as a notion was highly challenged by Christians who believed in the incorruptibility of the body. Christianity propagated the idea of the resurrection of the body at a postulated End of Days, and although the relationship of soul, mind, and body was part of a heated debate, resurrection of the corporeal body was important for attaining salvation.[38] Bodily resurrection was also the cornerstone of Christian faith in the afterlife. Metamorphosis, and the Platonizing notion of metempsychosis,[39] had no place in Christian belief, as Gregory observes in his poem *On the Soul* (*Carm. Dogm.* 40–45, 450A Moreschini and Sykes), since both reward and punishment require a body:

> I have never heard the discourse of a wise beast nor listened to a bush talking. Forever the crow does nothing but caw, and always in silence the fish swims through the flowing sea. If there is a final punishment for the

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into a spring. Cf. Karamanou 2003. For the myth of Romulus and Remus as an improbable model for Aura's twins, see Vian 2003, 75 n. 3. In Greek myth the most famous examples are Medea, Procne, and Tyro; other murderous mothers, e.g., Agaue and Ino, are maddened by a god, as is noted by Watson 1995, 24–25.

37 Cf. Lightfoot 2000, 294: "unlike most other victims of divine rape in classical mythology, she never acquiesces in pregnancy and childbirth."

38 From Origen to Synesius of Cyrene, there was a controversy whether, how, and if at all, the soul is separated from the body. See, e.g., Bynum 1995, 81–93.

39 Cf. Buxton 2009, 241 and Trumbower 2001, 112–113 on the Christian rejection of the notion.

> soul, as this view asserts, this circular motion of souls becomes pointless. Punishment of a soul devoid of flesh would be a great surprise.[40]

The idea of bodily resurrection also prompted awkward metaphysical questions about the body, its decay, and identity, in response to which symbolic and allegorizing answers were offered.[41] Bynum shows that Christian exegetes made decay and incorruptibility tangible through metaphors of eating. The imagery of being eaten or devoured, so prominent in accounts of martyrdom taking place in the arena, was associated with death, but at the same time metaphorical baptism in the blood of the martyrs guaranteed bodily resurrection, since body parts could be reassembled and "sprout" anew on the Final Day.[42] The eating/digestive metaphor was therefore used for a variety of images that were tightly related to the Eucharistic mystery. Early Christians were famously accused of cannibalism, particularly in discussions of the Holy Communion, while at the same time they believed this to be a feature of pagan myth.[43] According to Late Antique Christian belief, the mouth reflects the soul. As such, what comes in and out of the mouth symbolizes the purity or otherwise of the soul. Even burping was an indication of the "spiritual food" nourishing one's soul, as Basil comments on Psalm 44:3 ἐξηρεύξατο ἡ καρδία μου λόγον ἀγαθόν (*Hom. in Ps.* 44.3 *PG* 29.393):

> The soul nourished with the holy teaching brings forth a belch that corresponds to the food (intake). For this reason, since the food was rational and good, the prophet belches a good word (ἐπειδὴ λογικὴ ἦν καὶ ἀγαθὴ ἡ τροφή, λόγον ἀγαθὸν ἐξερεύγεται ὁ Προφήτης).

A further lens for understanding Aura's tale is the imagery of birth and resurrection. According to Christian beliefs, the womb and the tomb were the two places from where one was born through water, both literally and metaphorically.[44] Thus, not only was birth considered a first resurrection, but the nourish-

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40 Moreschini and Sykes 1997, 234 discuss this passage in the light of Plato, *Rep.* 617D.

41 For the spread of symbolic and allegorical exegesis in Late Antiquity, see Grabar 1951; Lamberton 1986; Struck 2004.

42 Cf. Bynum 1995, 78.

43 See, e.g., Tatian in *Or.* 25. Eating one's children appears during sieges and famine in the Bible as a frequent motif: cf. 2 Kgs. 6:24–7:20, Ezek. 5:10, Jer. 19:9, and Lam. 4:10. There is an extensive bibliography on the alleged cannibalism of early Christians: e.g., Henrichs 1970; Herrero de Jáuregui 2010, 67–68. See also Bynum 1995, 30–32, 55–56.

44 Especially through the mystery of baptism that associated closely the tomb and the womb, for which, cf. e.g., Jensen 2009, 27, 51, 249–250.

ment of the baby in the womb was also compared to the Eucharist. In a complex passage, Macarius of Magnesia (fifth century) refutes the alleged accusations of cannibalism that are alluded to in John's description of the Eucharistic mystery and argues that the kind of "cannibalism" that takes place during the Eucharist resembles the sustenance of the fetus inside the womb (*Apocr.* pp. 94–96 Blondel, ch. 1 on John 6:54):

> This is a most famous passage of the Teacher, in which he says: "if you will not eat of my flesh and will not drink my blood, you have no life inside yourselves." This is not gruesome at all … Look, for example, how the freshly born, and for the sake of speech new-born baby, that has departed through a dark and humid domicile (τὸ ἀπὸ σκοτεινῆς καὶ διύγρου μονῆς ἀναχωρῆσαν). If she will not eat the flesh and will not drink the blood of her mother, she has no life and is not even counted amongst men, but returns to the darkness of death (εἰς τὸν σκότον ἄπεισι τοῦ θανάτου).

Childbirth then was also seen as elaborating on the digestive metaphor. Ephraim the Syrian, for example, says that, on the Final Day, unlike human murderous mothers, Sheol/Hades vomits up her children.[45] Another burning issue was the fate of the so-called *abortivi*: if those who were born had the chance to be reborn in the afterlife, the question was trickier regarding the body and the soul of the embryo, as it was not clear what happened to the unborn and unbaptized babies. Thus, Ephraim the Syrian, for example, believed that the fetus was able to gain a form of life itself and have a soul of its own,[46] so that on the Last Day, it too might rise from the dead and reunite with its mother (*Sermon* I, 517–524):

> One who dies in the womb of his mother and never comes to life will be quickened at the moment (of resurrection) by Christ who quickens the dead; he will then be brought forth as an adult. If a woman dies while pregnant, and the child in her womb dies with her, that child will at the resurrection grow up and know its mother; and she will know her child.[47]

45 For the use of childbirth metaphor within the resurrection *exegesis*, see Ephraim, *Carmina Nisibena*, ed. Beck, vol. 241.103, *Hymn* 49, chap. 7, p. 95, "in famine, mothers may be driven to the horror of eating their own children. Yet Sheol (Hades) does not digest her own; she vomits them up and learns to 'fast'."

46 See further Mistry 2015.

47 Ephraim, *Sermones III*, ed. Beck, vol. 321.139.

This summary does not do justice to the richness of Bynum's amazing work on Late Antique digestive terminology, and to the complexity of the religious debates. It gives, nonetheless, an idea of the Late Antique imagery that entangled digestion, pregnancy, and death in an extensive metaphorical nexus that was also related to the Eucharistic mystery and, ultimately, resurrection.[48] This background I believe is important when considering Aura's episode in Nonnus in that it suggests that motifs known from classicizing myths could have been endowed in this later poem with an extra symbolic weight.

1.6 *Virginal (?) Motherhood*

There are several hints that suggest a Christian touch on the Aura story,[49] the first being the fact that Aura is a virgin mother. When Artemis approaches Aura during her labor, she mocks her new pregnant shape as being like that of a virgin in a childbed, an image that vividly relates, for a Christian audience, Aura with the Virgin Mary (*Dion.* 48.832–836):[50]

> Virgin, who made you a mother in childbed? You that knew nothing of marriage, how came that milk in your breast? I never heard or saw that a virgin bears a child. Has my father changed nature? Do women bear children without marriage (οὐ πυθόμην, ὅτι παρθένος υἷα λοχεύει. / ἦ ῥα φύσιν μετάμειψε πατὴρ ἐμός)?

Artemis plays here with the imagery of metamorphosis and, indeed, Aura's new pregnant body partakes in the metamorphic effect of astonishment.[51] But for a Christian audience Artemis' cruel ridicule would relate to the Virgin Mary, the virgin mother par excellence. The verb μετάμειψε, when used with words such as εἶδος, δέμας, and ὀπωπή, is a recurrent trope that highlights metamorphosis narratives in the *Dionysiaca*.[52] Nonetheless the verb appears in conjunction

48 Cf. Bynum 1995, 111: "Eucharist is central to salvation because by digesting it we become indigestible to natural process."

49 Cf. Agosti 2013, 85–92 for the milieu.

50 As Vian 2003, 94–95 notes in an often quoted passage, "the figure of Aura is not a caricature of the Virgin Mary, but her exact opposite: violated virgin and infanticide, she is quite the opposite of the loving mother of Jesus, who gave birth to him by immaculate conception." For other Marian allusions, see also Nonn. *Par.* 2.50–54, 13.111–112; cf. also Golega 1930, 68, citing Mt 1:23 (= Isaiah 7:14): ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἕξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν; Vian 1976, xiii n. 3; Livrea 2000, 86; Shorrock 2011, 62–63, 116; Accorinti 2012, 724; Franchi 2016, 250, who compares Mary and Aura further and juxtaposes the miracle at Cana with the transformation of the waters of the lake Astacis into wine.

51 Cf. also Buxton 2009, esp. on Aura 144–146.

52 See, e.g., δέμας, εἶδος ἀμείψας/μεταστρέψας *Dion.* 2.123 (Callisto), 2.130 (Philomela), 9.157

with the noun φύσις here and in the description of Zeus' bearing of Dionysus.[53] The transformation of Aura's φύσις, her nature, suggests that the change goes deeper than looks, face, and body, all of which are focalized in other metamorphoses in the poem.[54] For a Christian audience the very word φύσις was inscribed within a larger ongoing debate about Jesus' φύσις,[55] and, although Aura's narrative does not allude directly to this debate, the poem may echo a Christological catchword. The mythical transformation of Aura's φύσις links through *Kontrastimitation* to the divine nature of the Logos who is described in the first lines of the *Paraphrasis*.[56] Moreover, the exact combination of the verb μεταμείβω with φύσις also appears in Nonnus' *Paraphrasis* at a key moment in the narrative: in the description of the wedding at Cana, this cluster is used to describe the transubstantiation of water into wine,[57] evoking the ritual transformation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus. Consequently, although Aura's tale is based on classicizing motifs, the Christian signposts might have suggested an additional reading of this last metamorphosis of the poem by highlighting its unlikeness to the classical models.

1.7 *Excruciating Birth Pangs*

Another striking detail of Aura's punishment is her seemingly endless birth pangs, which in the mythical universe allude to those Hera inflicted on Leto. From a Christian perspective, these are punitive pangs as well. In the Old Testament, Eve is famous for having been cursed to bring forth her offspring in pain for her disobedience against god. Contrarily, the meekness of the Vir-

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(Phanes), 9.777 (Daphne), 11.242 and 12.101 (Ampelus), 25.23 (Hydaspes into wine); 2.2 (Syrinx); δέμας μεταλλάξασα.

53 See *Dion.* 9.11 φύσιν ἤλλαξεν, which suggests a transformation of the male Zeus into a female by giving birth to Dionysus. The third instance, *Dion.* 45.168 φύσιν ἰχθυόεσσαν, refers to the fish species.

54 For divine epiphanies, the most frequent formulation is with verbs μεταλλάσσω, μετατρέπω, and μεταμείβω: e.g. 40.74 (Athena, μεταστρέψασα δολοπλόκον εἶδος), 47.717 (Hera), 4.71 (Aphrodite, τύπον μεταλλάξασα), 22.74 (Hera, δέμας μεταλλάξασα), 31.294, 42.124, 47.631 (Dionysus, μετάτροπον εἶδος); or the face 45.168 (ἀμειβομένου προσώπου). A detailed analysis of the metamorphosis terminology in Nonnus is much needed.

55 Van Loon 2009 offers an overview of the crucial theological debate; for an in-depth analysis see Grillmeier 1975 e.g. 478–483.

56 See *Par.* 1.26–27 "(the only begotten Logos, purifies) with its spiritual rays shining the nature of men (καταυγάζων φύσιν ἀνδρῶν)." For a similar "bridge" between the ending of *Dion.* 48.978 σύνθρονος Ἀπόλλωνι and the beginning of the *Par.* 1.4 πατρὸς σύνθρονος ἕδρῃ, see Spanoudakis 2016, 622.

57 Cf. Nonn. *Par.* 2.35, Livrea 2000, 307–308. For the Eucharist as metamorphosis, see Buxton 2009, 9; Buynum 2001, 105. For Ambrose's association of the Cana wedding with aspects of metamorphosis, see Lefteratou 2018, 138.

gin,[58] whose conception of Jesus led to a miraculously painless childbirth, which according to Proclus of Constantinople (*Hom.* 77.90), also left Mary's body intact:

> You alone conceived without pleasure and gave birth without pain. You, who alone brought forth Emmanuel, as He himself desired. "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." The fruit, not the seed, the flower, not the passion.[59]

The mention of birth pangs might have prompted a Christian audience to contrast further Aura and Mary.[60] The willingness of Mary to accept God's will during the Annunciation counters Aura's rejection of womanhood and childbirth, which in combination with her otherwise ungodly attitude—she is famously θεήμαχος—leads to her punishment.[61] Furthermore, the emphasis of Proclus's passage on the "fruit" dwelling in Mary's womb and not the "seed" also contrasts with a major theme of the *Dionysiaca*, namely the wondrous nature of impregnation rather than parthenogenesis, and which in the Aura story is more about Dionysus' seduction of Aura than it is about Iacchus' birth. In this regard the perception of the pregnant body in the respective tales of Aura and Mary are two facets of the same coin: yet whereas the incorruptibility of Mary's body and her perpetual virginity was already a hot topic by the fifth century, making it altogether unsuited to a metamorphosis narrative,[62] Aura's body and mind

58 Gen. 3:17.

59 Procl. *Homilia in sanctam Virginem Mariam* 77.90, trans. Constas 2003, 263. The womb of Mary is further associated with the baptismal pool: see ibid. 100 "the baptismal font gives birth without tiring." See also Nonn. *Par.* 5.29 on baptism as labor (ἀντίτυπον μίμημα γυναικείου τοκετοῖο), together with Agosti 2003, 62 n. 73.

60 Hadjittofi 2008, 129–130 compares Aura's difficult labor with that of the martyr Felicitas. Felicitas had a very difficult labor after which the child is given to be raised by another woman, while Felicitas herself meets death in the arena. Hadjittofi also mentions the example of St. Melania, who wished to remain chaste after she produces an heir. When pregnant with her second child, she prays and gives birth prematurely and the infant dies. This event, in my view, allows her to revert to her prior "virginal" state. The pains and the risk of childbearing and birth were one of the major Christian arguments in support of virginity: cf. Ambr. *De virg.* 1.6.25–26, August. *Ep.* 150, 243.7, in Vuolanto 2015, 179–186.

61 Cf. also Lk 1:38 "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." According to Lightfoot 2000, 300 Aura is treated by Dionysus like a wild beast—being like other monsters of the *Dion.* θεήμαχος (Dion. 48.350, 426 and 393). On this see Hadjittofi, 2008, 123.

62 Cf. Mk 1:25, John 20:25 in the *Protev.* 19:3, in which the hand of the midwife Salome falls off after trying to investigate Mary's post-partum virginity. See also Proclus, *Hom.* 4.40–45.

are heavily transformed, during her pregnancy, in- and post-partum, into what eventually becomes a female *locus amoenus*.

1.8 *Oral Impregnation and Digestive Imagery*

These Christian echoes show the importance that is placed on the notions of bodily corruptibility or otherwise in the Christian imagination. These notions, with their associations of the above-mentioned digestive and rebirth imagery, might provide a better understanding of Aura's deeds and metamorphosis. Accordingly, the fate of her babies should also be re-examined in relation to the same topic, as they too form part of her bodily transformation. Here is the way that Nonnus describes her most horrid feats (*Dion.* 48.887–925):

> She took the babies and laid them in the den of a lioness for her dinner. But a panther with understanding mind licked their bodies with her ravening lips, and nursed the beautiful boys of Dionysus with intelligent breast … then Lelantus' daughter sprang up with wandering foot in the wild temper of a shaggy-crested lioness, tore one child from the wild beast's jaws and hurled it like a flash into the stormy air: the new-born child fell from the air headlong into the whirling dust upon the ground (ἠερόθεν προκάρηνος ἐπωλίσθησεν ἀρούρῃ), and she caught him up and gave him a tomb in her own maw (τυμβεύσατο λαιμῷ)—a family dinner indeed! The maiden Archeress was terrified at this heartless mother, and seized the other child of Aura … and gave it to Dionysus.

In this passage, Aura's suicidal leap mirrors the murder and subsequent death of her own child. Like her newborn she too falls headlong,[63] and the huntress becomes an aquatic element together with her infant, suggesting a further connection between water, belly, and grave. The moment she dives into Sangarius, she is no longer a virgin, but a post-partum mother who has just eaten one of her twins. Yet, whereas by consuming her own offspring Aura deceives herself into believing that she may return to her previous non-pregnant stage,[64] she becomes pregnant anew.

We saw above how early Christianity established a close relationship between the imagery of death and rebirth with pregnancy through the medium of digestive imagery. Images of oral impregnation abound in Christian texts, especially when it comes to Mary's miraculous conception of the

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63 *Dion.* 48.933 καὶ βυθίῳ προκάρηνος ἐπεσκίρτησε ῥεέθρῳ ~ 48.921 ἠερόθεν προκάρηνος ἐπωλίσθησεν ἀρούρῃ.

64 Cf. *Dion.* 48.905–909 μηδ' … γυνὴ φιλότεκνος ἀκούσω.

Word.[65] Furthermore, a major *Leitmotif* of the *Paraphrase* is Jesus' "pregnant voice," that impregnates his disciples with faith and wisdom, resulting in a second metaphorical birth as Christians.[66] Meanwhile in the *Dionysiaca*, swallowing is closely related to pregnancy, since the births of Zagreus and Dionysus are the outcomes of an oral and not coital impregnation, echoing a Late Antique leitmotif.[67] In the cases of Nicaea and Aura, pregnancy results from drinking Dionysus' wine, a metaphor alluding to oral impregnation.[68] By swallowing her infant, Aura thus re-enacts her seduction by Dionysus: not only does she become pregnant again, but she also partakes of Dionysus' own "divine flesh" just as she had previously drunk from his "blood," i.e., in the form of the wine from the pond.[69] When Aura characteristically buries her child inside her throat (τυμβεύσατο λαιμῷ) before her suicide, she sends it back the same way it was allegedly conceived, through the mouth. Thus, she somehow reverts to her previous pregnant—albeit not virginal—state, in such a way that the classical *topos* of the nymph's aquatic metamorphosis, which did not fit her perfectly, is altogether deconstructed.

65 Cf. Epiphanius, *In laudes Mariae* 43.492, "The holy and chaste Mary remained in virginity (virgin) … the one who bore inside her the God Logos." See also the sexual imagery in Ephraim, *Hymns on Nativity* 6: "Anna (the prophetess) embraced Him, and put her mouth to His lips, and the Spirit rested upon her lips … the barren woman (Elizabeth) cried out … 'Blessed be thy fruit, which made the barren vine to bear a cluster'" (trans. K.E. McVey).

66 Cf. *Par.* 1.93 θεοδινέος ἔγκυον ὀμφῆς (Baptist); 5.127 θεοδέγμονος ἔγκυον ὀμφῆς (Baptist); 3.53 (Nicodemus); along with De Stefani 2002, 170; Agosti 2003, 170; Rotondo 2008. For the mouth as source of illumination, cf. how Physis, the personification of Nature, restores cosmic peace from her open trenches in *Dion.* 2.651; most importantly the phrase χθόνιος κενεών is also used for Jesus' divine, birth/light-giving spittle which has baptismal connotations in *P.* 9.27; see Agosti 2003, 64 and Lefteratou 2017b, 276–287.

67 Hyg. *Fab.* 167. See also Kerényi and Manheim 1976, 259, citing Procl. *H.* 7 (Athena), 11–15 "you, who saved the heart, as yet unchopped, of lord Bacchus in the vault of heaven, when he was once divided up by the hands of the Titans, and brought it to his father" (trans. Berg). See Berg 2001, 288–290 with an extensive analysis of the Orphic sources. Doroszewski 2016, 329 mentions the cult of Dionysus Chthonius, according to which Semele conceived Dionysus after consuming the heart of the Zagreus.

68 Cf. *Dion.* 48.818 "why did you also drink wine, which robbed me of my girdle? Why did you also drink wine, Aura, until you were with child?" For oral sex in the *Dionysiaca*, see Newbold 1998; on Persephone's (6.162) and Semele's oral impregnation (7.333, 337), see Newbold 2016, 205. For the similar conceptions of Dionysus and Iacchus, see also Collart 1930, 270.

69 The possibility of reverting to a prior "chaste" status post-partum for women was a topic much debated by Christians; see Copper 1996, 72–78; Winstead 1997, who observes that by the sixth century all female martyrs were virgins, as opposed to the third-century martyred mothers.

The description of her metamorphosis, quoted in the opening of this paper, highlights her new pregnant reshaping: her body becomes aquatic but her quiver is also transformed into a cavern through which the water passes, an image bearing sexual connotations. The curve of her quiver stands for the female elements, whereas the arrows stand for the male parts. This seemingly yin (female) and yang (male) balance does not seem to represent Aura and Dionysus, who is indifferent about his former bride, but more plausibly stands for Aura and the male twin who has returned inside her belly-womb. Aura's body, both post-partum and postmortem, just like her throat, becomes a beautiful fertile tomb, that perpetuates to some extent the existence of one of her divine twins.[70]

This eternal post- and pre-partum stage illustrates clearly Gregory's belief that "punishment of a soul devoid of flesh would be a great surprise." Aura was condemned to remain what she used to disdain, namely a female motherly body.[71] The horror of her retribution is better understood if judged against the relevant Christian background of Nonnus' readers, not necessarily as a mockery of orthodox doctrine but as a subversion of the mythical narrative in the light of a Christian reading.[72] Just as Aura's seduction and labor contrast with the Annunciation and Mary's virginity, Aura's metamorphosis alludes to and contradicts Mary's own transformation into the famous *hortus conclusus* of the *Song of Songs*. And whereas Mary is the blessed *fons signatus*, Aura's aquatic metamorphosis is a condemnation of sorts.

At best, Aura's ultimate serene transformation might be interpreted in a positive light only as a restoration of the cosmic, and cosmogonic, order, not in a Christian but in the classical reading. The metamorphosis passage that opened

70 The existence of twins seems very complex; see also Hadjittofi 2016, 127, on Europa's twins. Aura's twins not only recall famous mythical twins, such as Apollo and Artemis, Castor and Polydeuces, Zethus and Amphion, Romulus and Remus (see Vian 2003, 75 n. 3), but also their Christian counterparts: Rebecca's twins, Esau and Jacob (who were even fighting inside her womb according *Gen.* 25:22–26), and Tamar's twins, Perez and Zerah, after incest in *Gen.* 38. It is even possible that Cain and Abel were thought to be twins by some Late Antique exegetes, based on Gen. 4:1–2, for which see Grypeou and Spurling 2013, 136–140. Although twins were treated positively in Graeco-Roman myth, in some cultures, according to ethnographic evidence, they are believed to bring misfortune, and therefore one of the twins is killed at birth; see further Rowland and Jennings 1984. In Christian thought, twins were thought to incarnate darkness and light, e.g., Esau and Jacob.

71 Cf. Schmiel 1993, 176: "the virgin who prided herself on her manly breasts … becomes, *inter alia* but first and foremost, a pair of breasts doomed to gush forth water, day and night, to eternity or geological catastrophe."

72 Spanoudakis 2007, 88–89: "whereas there is no trace of mockery of the Christian God in the Paraphrasis, Nonnus plays with Christian ideas under the safe cover of the pagan gods."

my discussion precisely mirrors the peace after the storm, with Artemis assuaging her anger and taking care of Aura's second twin son. If Dionysus is brought to the heavens, and Iacchus remains on Earth together with Nicaea's daughter Telete, then a third "Dionysus" dwells in this liminal metamorphic underworld, if not one who is resurrected at least one in the form of the fetus in the womb-tomb. Thus, besides the "diachronic" triad of Zagreus-Dionysus-Iacchus, whose adventures have been the theme of the epic, the world will have yet another "synchronic" triad: namely, Bacchus on Olympus, Iacchus at Eleusis, and a second Zagreus-like figure in a liminal metamorphic underworld within Aura.[73]

2 Conclusions

This chapter has surveyed the classical and Christian models for Aura's metamorphosis. In it I have argued that, whereas the *Dionysiaca* makes ample use of the extensive corpus of classicizing mythography, and it is aware of rare sources of some myths, such as Aura's relationship to the mountain Dindymon, the treatment of Aura's metamorphosis with which the epic closes subverts the classicizing expectations both at the mythical and at the narrative level. This original approach toward the earlier mythical tradition is important for understanding Aura's story as an innovative addition to the development of the myth. Aura does not become yet another Daphne or Niobe, nor simply another Callisto, Agaue, or Medea. The subversion of the typical patterning, despite the intransience of some motifs, culminates in her outrageous filicide and cannibalism of her son. Aura is likened not only to other female analogs, nymphs, and murderous mothers, but also to tecnophagic male characters, such as Cronus or Tereus. Nonnus' Aura episode is thus full of clusters of antitheses merging together male and female, virgin and mother, victim and murderess. This intensifies the subversion of the reader's anticipation at a narrative level, since she/he is not altogether reassured about the outcome of the story, which sounds so familiar and predictable but is twisted in the end. In addition, at a mythical level, the syncretic approach of such a variety of myths indicates that Aura's story, shocking as it is, was probably intended as an innovative touch to the well-known pattern of female aquatic metamorphosis. Yet whereas mythical virgin nymphs and huntresses like Daphne or Arethusa are punished for rebuffing Aphrodite, Nonnus' Aura is punished with Aphrodite for rebuking Artemis. The point here is a revision of the notions of virginity and reproduction.

73 For the Orphic origin of this triad, see Vian 1994, 210.

Nonnus' fresh look on metamorphosis might not have been possible without the debates about bodily mutation and (in)corruptibility in Late Antiquity including virginity and parthenogenesis. The Christian catchwords that are spread across the narrative, such as the emphasis on the mutability of Aura's *physis* above and beyond her body (*demas*) or form (*eidos*) as tends also to be the rule in other Nonnian metamorphosis narratives, are aimed to trigger the reader's attention, and to link this tale, intertextually, to the other Nonnian epic, the *Paraphrasis* where these terms appear in their theological context. Equally, Aura's excruciating birth pangs, and her disobedience against the gods, relate her to Eve and help to construe her as an anti-Marian avatar a negative model of of female procreation punished in the flesh. These observations suggest that the *Dionysiaca* assumes a complex notion of metamorphosis, one which is associated with both pagan and Christian imageries that are not exclusive of one another. Through Aura's astonishing shape shifting, Nonnus successfully reflects in a meta-mythological way about the kind of metamorphosis that might be expected within his cultural setting of Late Antiquity: Aura eventually changes not only her name, body, and her mind, but entirely as she becomes—*mutatis mutandis*—a feminine *locus amoenus*, a negative *hortus conclusus*; a kind of metamorphosed punishment. The nymph's shape is no longer that of the mythical seduced virgin huntress, but that of a baby inside the womb, which, perhaps, awaits its (re-)birth into a Platonizing or Christian future. Above all, Aura's transformation shows that even after a millennium and more of metamorphosis literature, the variations on the theme were far from being exhausted.

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CHAPTER 4

I Alone Had an Untimely Love: The Ephebic 'Epyllia' of *Dionysiaka* 10–11

Benjamin Acosta-Hughes

At *Dionysiaca* 10.139–144, in one of the "meanwhiles" that mark Nonnus' epic (and are much less characteristic of Homer), Dionysus has grown to adolescence:

τόφρα δὲ καὶ Διόνυσος ὑπὸ κλίμα Λυδὸν ἀρούρης,
εὔια δινεύων Κυβεληίδος ὄργανα Ῥείης,
ἤνθεε μῆκος ἔχων, ὅσον ἤθελεν· ὑψιπόρου δὲ
φεύγων Ἠελίοιο μεσημβρίζουσαν ἱμάσθλην
ἥσυχα παφλάζοντι δέμας φαίδρυνε λοετρῷ
Μῃονίου ποταμοῖο …

Meanwhile Dionysus in the region of Lydia's fields, brandishing the Euian instruments of Cybelian Rheia, came to flower with the stature that he wished. Fleeing the midday lash of high-moving Helios he caused his body to shine in the quietly splashing bath of the Meionian river …[1]

Several features of this passage are typical of the scene-setting for ephebic love scenes: Dionysus is at the "bloom of youth" (ἤνθεε); his avoiding the midday sun through exposure of his physical beauty in the water (δέμας φαίδρυνε);[2] and that he is engaging in playful athletic activity. And while τόφρα δὲ καί is a perfectly innocuous epic phrase, a reader attuned to earlier Hellenistic poetry might well recall the τόφρα δ' Ἔρως that opens the scene of Medea's passionate first sight of Jason at Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica* 3.275 (Apollonius' portrayal of Medea's infatuation finds a number of parallels in Nonnus' depiction of the young Dionysus in love).

1 Text of *Dionysiaca* 10 is that of G. Chrétien augmented by F. Vian (Chrétien and Vian 1985); the text of *Dionysiaca* 11 is that of Vian 1995. All translations are my own.

2 There is very likely here an echo of Pentheus' taunt to Dionysus at Eur. *Ba.* 457–459 λευκὴν δὲ χροιὰν ἐκ παρασκευῆς ἔχεις, / οὐχ ἡλίου βολαῖσιν ἀλλ' ὑπὸ σκιᾶς / τὴν Ἀφροδίτην καλλονῇ θηρώμενος ("you purposely keep your skin white, hunting Aphrodite with your beauty not in the rays of the sun but in shadow"). I thank Filip Doroszewski for making me aware of the allusion.

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In the manner of a mythological "black hunter," to cite Vidal-Nacquet,[3] Dionysus spends the early part of his adolescence in rustic athletic activities, in the company of satyrs and the aged Silenus (*Dion.*10.141–175). When the god takes to the water at 10.169–174, the leitmotif of the erotic is signaled by Nonnus' own version of the blooming landscape that accompanies the divine love-making in Homer's Διὸς ἀπάτη (*Il.* 14.346–351). The scenery around the golden Pactolus comes into bloom to reflect the beauty of the young god in the water (*Dion.* 10.169–174).

καὶ θεὸς ὀρθώσας κεφαλὴν καὶ στέρνα πετάσσας,
χεῖρας ἐρετμώσας, χρυσέην ἐχάραξε γαλήνην·
καὶ ῥόδον αὐτοτέλεστον ἀκύμονες ἔπτυον ὄχθαι,
καὶ κρίνον ἐβλάστησε, καὶ ἠόνας ἔστεφον Ὧραι
Βάκχου λουομένοιο, καὶ ἀστράπτοντι ῥεέθρῳ
ἄπλοκα κυανέης ἐρυθαίνετο βόστρυχα χαίτης.

> And the god, upon raising his head and spreading out his chest, used his hands as oars and cut the golden smooth surface. The banks, without waves, cast up a spontaneous rose, the lily grew, the Seasons crowned the shore as Bacchus bathed, and with the light-cast stream the free-flowing locks of his dark hair were reddened.

The presentation of Dionysus in all his beauty in the water, along with the pathetic fallacy of nature's reaction in turn, provides the ideal tonal setting for what follows: Dionysus, hunting alone, first gazes upon Ampelus. Eros and the hunt has a long tradition in homoerotic Greek literature, characteristic already of classical Greek artistic and literary representations (e.g. Plato's *Lysis* 206a–b), and one that comes to have a prominent role in Hellenistic epigram, of which Callimachus' *Epigram* 31 Pf. = 1 G.-P., might serve as an apt example:

Ὡγρευτής, Ἐπίκυδες, ἐν οὔρεσι πάντα λαγωὸν
διφᾷ καὶ πάσης ἴχνια δορκαλίδος
στίβῃ καὶ νιφετῷ κεχρημένος· ἢν δέ τις εἴπῃ
'τῆ, τόδε βέβληται θηρίον', οὐκ ἔλαβεν
χοὐμὸς ἔρως τοιόσδε· τὰ μὲν φεύγοντα διώκειν
οἶδε, τὰ δ᾽ ἐν μέσσῳ κείμενα παρπέταται.

3 Vidal-Nacquet 1986.

> A hunter, Epicydes, in the mountains, taking advantage of hoar frost and snow, follows every hare and the tracks of every roe deer.[4] If someone says "there lies a beast shot" he does not take it up. And such is my love. It knows to pursue what flees, but what lies in its midst it flies on by.

And hereupon, in Nonnus' woodland, the adolescent Dionysus first catches sight of a κοῦρος called Ampelus (*Dion.* 10.175–178):

καί ποτε θηρεύων ὑπὸ ῥωγάδα δάσκιον ὕλης
ἥλικος ἠιθέοιο ῥοδώπιδι θέλγετο μορφῇ.
ἤδη γὰρ Φρυγίης ὑπὸ δειράδα κοῦρος ἀθύρων
Ἄμπελος ἠέξητο, νεοτρεφὲς ἔρνος Ἐρώτων·

> And once when he was hunting below the leafy breach[5] of the wood he was charmed by the rosy form of an adolescent of his own age. For already at the foot of Phrygian mountains a boy, Ampelus, grew up playing, a newly fostered shoot of the Erotes.

A question that arises in the mind of an attentive reader is who, or perhaps better what, is Ampelus? The etymological association with the vine is clear, and even perhaps hinted at by Nonnus himself in the same passage, where the rare word ῥῶξ has a homonym that stands for ῥάξ, which is a less common word for "grape." However, the exact nature of Ampelus is important for the sympathy of this part of the poem, and for considering the extent to which Nonnus is furthering the treatment of homoerotic love in epic. In Ovid's *Fasti* 3.406–414, the first extant literary treatment of this figure, Ampelus is the son of a satyr and a nymph (and termed by the poet at line 412 a *puer*). It might be significant to note here that Ovid concludes his very brief narrative with a reference to Ampelus' catasterism at the hand of Dionysus. In Nonnus' treatment Ampelus is consistently a κοῦρος or a νέος. Francis Vian, in his final edition of this book of the poem,[6] understands Ampelus to be a satyr,[7] as does Marie-

4 Marshall 2015 has made a convincing case, with support from passages on winter hunting in Greek literature, that κεχρημένος here is not passive, as usually rendered, but middle voice, and has its standard sense of "to use." The hoar frost and snow allow the hunter to follow the animal's footprints.

5 The translation into English is slightly tricky, as ideally one would want to maintain something of the ambiguity. Chrétien/Vian 1985 has "d'un escarpement ombragé d'arbes": see the note ad loc.

6 Cf. above note 1.

7 Vian 1985, 67 and *passim*.

Christine Fayant in her 2012 study of the episode.[8] In Nonnus' treatment, on the other hand, Ampelus seems rather to be consistently individualized, set apart from the other satyrs,[9] and even though Dionysus, in his own prayer to his father Zeus, refers to Ampelus as "my satyr" at 10.308 ("the beauty of my satyr is dearer to me than Olympus"), he then compares Ampelus to Ganymede, in particular Ganymede *qua* shepherd, to the latter's disadvantage. His prayer closes with an exhortation that Zeus find rather his own male beloveds from the ranks of possible options (*Dion.* 10.317–320):

Ἄμπελος ἱμερόεις Γανυμήδεος εἶδος ἐλέγχει·
Τμώλιος Ἰδαίου πέλε φέρτερος. εἰσὶ δὲ πολλαὶ
ἄλλων ἠιθέων ἐραταὶ στίχες, οὓς ἅμα πάντας,
ἢν ἐθέλῃς, ἀγάπαζε λιπὼν ἕνα παῖδα Λυαίῳ.

Lovely Ampelus wins over Ganymede's form, the Tmolian is better than the Idaian. There are many charming ranks of other youths, love them all, if you like, but leave one boy to Lyaeus.

The poet immediately follows the young god's prayer with a comparison of the love of Apollo for Admetus (a youth, definitely, like Ganymede, a human youth), with Dionysus' love for Ampelus. The slippage between sylvan creature and human youth continues throughout the episode, even after Ampelus has died, and here I would suggest that Nonnus himself is consciously marking his own play with woodland creature and human ephebe (*Dion.* 11.244–251):

καὶ νέκυος χαρίεντος ὑπὲρ δαπέδοιο ταθέντος
οὐ χλόος ἀμφεχύθη ῥοδόεν δέμας· ὠκυμόρου δὲ
καὶ πλόκαμοι χαρίεντες ἐρωτοτόκοιο καρήνου
αὔραις φειδομένῃσιν ἐπαιθύσσοντο προσώπῳ·
ἦν δέ τις ἱμερόεις κεκονιμένος. ἀμφὶ δὲ νεκρῷ
Σιληνοὶ στενάχιζον, ἐπωδύροντο δὲ Βάκχοι.
οὐδέ ἑ κάλλος ἔλειπε, καὶ εἰ θάνεν· ὡς Σάτυρος δὲ
κεῖτο νέκυς γελόωντι πανείκελος ...

And as the lovely corpse lay on the ground, no pallor was poured on his rosy flesh. The beautiful curls of the head so lovely and so quick-fated were

8 Fayant 2012.

9 E.g. *Dion.* 10.278–279 καί μιν ἰδὼν Σατύρων τις ἐθέλγετο θέσπιδι μορφῇ, / καὶ κρυφίην ἐρόεσσαν ὑποκλέπτων φάτο φωνήν;

> blown over his face by the breezes. He was a lovely sight even in the dust. Around the corpse groaned the Silenoi, and the Bacchoi mourned. Nor did his beauty leave him, even though he was dead. *As though a Satyr* his dead body lay like one smiling.

In his own version of the preserved beauty of Patroclus, the lesser Achilles,[10] Nonnus has Dionysus himself accomplish the *prothesis* of Ampelus' body (*Dion.* 11.230–243): the laying out is framed on both sides by a comparison with human Hylas, beloved of Heracles (lines 225–230), and Hyacinthus (255–261), also beloved of a god, also dead and so captured as a perfect adolescent (and, like Ampelus, transformed into a plant associated with the god, Phoebus Atymnius). In a striking narrative gesture, Nonnus also includes here another type of homoerotic love story with a different conclusion, that of Pelops, who successfully passes out of the ephebic phase into adulthood and marriage.[11] Again Nonnus shows a certain creative refinement of a traditional Hellenistic motif, the dead ephebic beloved, by contrasting the two possible fates that necessarily become these youths: early death, and so transition to another world; or passage into adulthood, also transition to another world, where homoerotic love is replaced by hetero-erotic love, marriage, and adulthood. His lament for Ampelus at 11.276–279 remarkably mourns the boy in terms of both his present adolescence, and in terms of his failing to reach a successful, heterosexual adulthood:

> μοῦνος ἐγὼ νέον ἔσχον ἀώριον· ἱμερόεις γὰρ
> Ἄμπελος οὐ γάμον εἶδε βιοσσόον, οὐδ᾽ ἐπὶ παστῷ
> νυμφιδίην νέος οὗτος ἐμὴν ἔζευξεν ἀπήνην ...

> I alone had an untimely love. For delightful Ampelus did not know life-preserving marriage, nor did this one yoke my wedding car to his marriage chamber ...

One passage that shows the poet's ambiguous treatment of Ampelus at its most clever is in Dionysus' dream of the boy at 10.264–271, a section framed, one should note, by passages that denote the god's jealousy and fear of the loss of his beloved (the treatment of the psychological in this episode is truly fascinat-

10 Hom. *Il.* 19.38–39. It is worth noting that whereas the gods Thetis and Apollo are responsible for the preservation of their favorites, here it is Dionysus himself, though through Rhea (so also a female goddess) who does this for his beloved.

11 The poet Pindar had of course recounted this episode in his first *Olympian Ode*.

ing, as a study of a figure tormented by passion and its attendant emotions the episode does not quite rival, but certainly aligns with, and is clearly influenced by, Medea's passion for Jason in Apollonius' *Argonautica* 3):

καὶ γλυκὺν εἶχεν ὄνειρον ὀνειροτόκων ἐπὶ λέκτρων,
καὶ φιλίους ὀάριζε νέῳ ψευδήμονι μύθους
μιμηλῆς ὁρόων σκιοειδέα φάσματα μορφῆς.
εἰ δέ τί οἱ δύσμορφον ἐπήρατος εἶχεν ὀπωπή,
ἱμερόεν πέλε τοῦτο ποθοβλήτῳ Διονύσῳ,
φίλτερον ἡβητῆρος ὅλου χροός· εἰ δέ οἱ ἄκρη
συμφερτὴ κεχάλαστο δι᾽ ἰξύος ὄρθιος οὐρή,
καὶ μέλιτος γλυκεροῖο μελιχροτέρη πέλε Βάκχῳ

> And he [sc. Dionysus] had a sweet dream upon his dream-breeding bed, he murmured sweet words to a false youth, seeing the shadowy phantasm of a mocking form. If his loving gaze found some imperfection in the boy, this was lovely to Dionysus struck with longing, more beautiful than his whole adolescent flesh. If the upright tip of his tail from his waist grew slack, this was sweeter than sweet honey to Bacchus.

Both ἴξυς and οὐρή have more than one meaning. The ἴξυς can be the waist or lower back; the οὐρή can be the tail (more commonly), or less commonly, the male member.[12] Given the surrounding context, Dionysus' almost frantic jealousy for his beloved, the latter is more likely: sexual continence on the part of Ampelus brings security to Dionysus, and there is an overall preference in Greek homoerotic literature for the *eromenos* **not** to show sexual arousal. Indeed what might have been thought a clear proof of Ampelus' nature (as a satyr he can have a tail, or be easily sexually aroused) rather looks like another instance of Ampelus the satyr characterized as the human beloved of Greek homoerotic poetry. Granted that this is a rather rare use of the term οὐρή; granted too that this is Nonnus.

Elevated Greek poetry, unlike *iambos* or comedy, and also unlike a good number of the homoerotic epigrams in Strato's *Musa Puerilis*, tends to eschew what might be termed the sexually prurient: thus a study like the late Jack Winkler's "Gardens of Nymphs: Public and Private in Sappho's Lyrics" becomes the more helpful as a guide here.[13] Several of the scenes of Dionysus and Ampelus

12 So, e.g., Sophocles fr. 1078 Radt; Hom. *Epigr*. 12. Henderson 1975, 27 notes the rather obvious parallel of German *Schwanz*.

13 Winkler 1981.

together in athletic pursuits, their wrestling as ἀεθλητῆρες Ἐρώτων, "athletes of the Loves" (*Dion.* 10.339), are worth careful reading in this regard; the heavily erotic overtones are indeed meant to be read in a sexual key.

The Ampelus episode of books 10–11 of *Dionysiaca* has recently received a masterful treatment of its relationship to Theocritean, and the larger Hellenistic, bucolic tradition in Daniele Mazza's superb doctoral dissertation, "La fortuna della poesia ellenistica nelle Dionisiache di Nonno di Panopoli,"[14] which hopefully will soon be accessible as a monograph. Here I would like to add a few observations that complement Mazza's work, and that may lead to further study of the homoerotic loves of Dionysus in Nonnus' poem.

Ephebic love and beauty, and generally its literary representations, is necessarily of brief duration. In some myths, those of Pelops and Adrastus, for example, the *eromenos* comes to be an adult man, and the ephebic love fades into the background. But also very common, as in the case of Ampelus, is an early death that preserves ephebic beauty at a specific moment.[15] Patroclus is in some ways a Homeric forbear of this figure: the closest friend and lesser image of the much more powerful Achilles, Patroclus is killed when he "competes" with a more mature hero.[16] Ephebic eros, though, as Marco Fantuzzi has recently convincingly shown, does not have a place in Homeric epic,[17] but *does* in the context of shorter Hellenistic hexameter poems and of course in Pindar. Nonnus, however, in his ongoing variegation of genre, includes several famed homoerotic episodes in his delineation of Dionysus as a youth and as a young warrior. In the case of Ampelus (and Calamus and Carpus) the youthful beauty of the boy is cut off, and so is not lost or transformed through the transition to male adulthood. In the "chronology" of Dionysus this period of playful athletic contest is set in his own ephebic period, a period in which he takes pleasure in the youthful athletic competitions that prefigure the long martial contests of his young adulthood—Nonnus' description of Dionysus and Ampelus beginning to wrestle together as ἀεθλητῆρες Ἐρώτων is indeed very apt.

The initial description of Ampelus already captures something of the perfect moment of boyhood. He is the ὁμέψιος "playmate,"[18] Dionysus' κοῦρος ἀθύ-

14 Mazza 2012. For an English introduction on this theme, see Acosta-Hughes 2016.

15 For the Hellenistic period, see Acosta-Hughes 2014. Seminal to this subject are Reed 1997 and Calame 1996. Lament for the young bridegroom has a long tradition in Greek culture: esp. valuable here is Alexiou 1974. This is paralleled in many cultural traditions, including the devotion to the young war dead in the Confederate South of the USA.

16 And we might note here the perfect preservation of his body: Hom. *Il.* 19.29–33.

17 Fantuzzi 2012.

18 A rare word, but cf. ἑψιάασθαι at Callim. *Cer.* 3 and ἑψιόωντο at Callim. *Dian.* 38, both

ρων, he is not quite yet at the ἥβης χρύσεον ἄνθος: the description is indeed a studied reflection of the description of the adolescent Dionysus himself. The ongoing contrasts of red and white are another standard feature of this type of ephebic description (also upon early ephebic death). Dionysus catches sight of Ampelus at the time when Ampelus has a combination of male and female characteristics,[19] as yet in very early youth (*Dion.* 10.189: ἐκ μελέων δ' ὅλον εἶαρ ἐφαίνετο, "from his limbs shown forth all of spring").

Nonnus is unusual among authors of ephebic love narratives in the length and detail he gives to the Dionysus/Ampelus episode. And while not graphically sexual, which would, again, not suit the tone of high epic,[20] sexual love is more than implied in Dionysus' recurrent jealousy of his younger playmate, and in their shared athletic activities, particularly the depiction of the two youths' wrestling scene.[21] Of Dionysus' jealousy (*Dion.* 10.238–249):

εἰ δὲ βαθυσκάρθμοιο πόθου πεφορημένος οἴστρῳ
Ἄμπελος ὀρχηστῆρι ποδῶν ἐλελίζετο παλμῷ,
καὶ Σατύρῳ παίζοντι συνέπλεκε χεῖρα χορεύων,
δόχμιον ἐκ ταρσοῖο μετήλυδα ταρσὸν ἀμείβων,
Βάκχος ὀπιπεύων φθονερῇ δεδόνητο μερίμνῃ.
εἴ ποτε Σιληνοῖσιν ὁμίλεεν, εἴ τινι κούρῳ
ἥλικι θηρητῆρι συνέτρεχεν ἐς δρόμον ἄγρης,
ζηλήμων Διόνυσος ἐρήτυε, μή τις ὀιστῷ
βλήμενος ἰσοτύπῳ φρενοθελγέι λάτρις Ἐρώτων
παιδὸς ἐλαφρονόοιο παραπλάγξειε μενοινήν,
καὶ νέον ἱμερόεντα μεταστήσειε Λυαίου,
ἀρτιθαλὴς ἅτε κοῦρος ὁμόχρονον ἥλικα τέρπων.

And if when driven by the sting for high-leaping desire, Ampelus twirled with dancing sole of his feet, and in dancing he wove his hand with that of playful satyr, changing as he went succeeding foot upon foot, Bacchus

instances of divinities at play. Particularly relevant here is Ap.Rh. *Arg.* 3.117–118 (ἀμφ' ἀστραγάλοισι δὲ τώγε / χρυσείοις, ἅ τε κοῦροι ὁμήθεες, ἑψιόωντο) of Eros and Ganymede at play.

19 Noteworthy here is the attraction of the nape of the boy's neck, white on (assumedly) a dark body, lines 184–185.

20 Winkler 1981 remains a seminal study of reading sexuality in elevated poetry.

21 Cf. lines 344–346, 351–352, 357–360. Descriptions of two bodies wrestling is apt to be very physically vivid (*Il.* 23.700–734 is an outstanding early example), but Nonnus' treatment is a distinctly erotic one.

> as he gazed upon him was shaken with devastating concern. If Ampelus ever associated with the Silenoi, if he pursued the chase with companion hunter of his own age, jealous Dionysus restrained him, lest someone struck by a mind-charming sting of equal imprint, now a slave of Love, should drive the boy's deer-like mind from its course, and turn the desirous youth from Lyaios, as a just blooming boy might turn a youth of his own age.

Lines 245–246 immediately recall two Apollonian passages, *Argonautica* 1.1269 of Heracles at the loss of Hylas,[22] κακῷ βεβολημένος οἴστρῳ, and 3.276–277, the comparison of Eros to a gadfly.[23] In the former passage, unlike in Theocritus' treatment of the Heracles/Hylas episode at *Idyll* 13, the relationship between Heracles and Hylas is not explicitly erotic. The erotic experience is rather transferred onto a local nymph, esp. at *Argonautica* 1.1229–1232, where Hylas' beauty seen in the light of the moon is a noteworthy parallel with Nonnus' association of Ampelus with Selene (*Dion.* 10.186–187, 191–192, 215–216). The association with the moon is typical of young girls, but also of ephebes, as is the partial whiteness of their skin. The Nonnian passage is of course entirely erotic, with the gadfly, here associated with Ampelus himself, leading a possible rival to mislead the boy's easily persuaded mind—in the manner of *eromenoi* of paiderastic epigram, the boy is, in Callimachus' terms, a περίφοιτος ἐρώμενος,[24] of labile psyche and so easily charmed. Line 247 παιδὸς ἐλαφρονόοιο παραπλάγξειε μενοινήν is a particularly striking example of Nonnian characterization. Striking too in this context is ἀρτιθαλής, which can only refer to a very brief period.

Nonnus' implicit comparisons of Ampelus to Hylas, and Dionysus' own contextualization of his beloved in mythological comparisons with Hyacinthus and Ganymede, serve to underline the necessarily short period of ephebic eros, and also to prefigure the tragedy that will soon ensue. In the former case Nonnus' play on Theocritus' text at *Idyll* 13.36 ff. is especially revealing (*Dion.* 10.226–229):

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22 Ap.Rh. *Arg.* 1.1265–1272: ὡς δ' ὅτε τίς τε μύωπι τετυμμένος ἔσσυτο ταῦρος / πίσεά τε προλιπὼν καὶ ἑλεσπίδας, οὐδὲ νομήων / οὐδ' ἀγέλης ὄθεται, πρήσσει δ' ὁδὸν ἄλλοτ' ἄπαυστος, / ἄλλοτε δ' ἱστάμενος καὶ ἀνὰ πλατὺν αὐχέν' ἀείρων / ἵησιν μύκημα, κακῷ βεβολημένος οἴστρῳ—/ ὣς ὅγε μαιμώων ὁτὲ μὲν θοὰ γούνατ' ἔπαλλεν / συνεχέως, ὁτὲ δ' αὖτε μεταλλήγων καμάτοιο / τῆλε διαπρύσιον μεγάλῃ βοάασκεν ἀυτῇ.

23 Ap.Rh. *Arg.* 3.275–277: Τόφρα δ' Ἔρως πολιοῖο δι' ἠέρος ἷξεν ἄφαντος, / τετρηχὼς οἷόν τε νέαις ἐπὶ φορβάσιν οἶστρος / τέλλεται, ὅν τε μύωπα βοῶν κλείουσι νομῆες.

24 Callim. *Epigr.* 1 GP = 32 Pf.

> εἴ ποτε Πακτωλοῖο παρ᾽ ἀνθεμόεντι ῥεέθρῳ
> δηθύνων ἀνέμιμνεν, ὅπως ἐπιδόρπιον εἴη
> αὐτὸς ἑῷ βασιλῆι φέρων γλυκερώτερον ὕδωρ,
> κούρου νόσφι μένοντος ἱμάσσετο Βάκχος ἀνίῃ·
>
> If ever by the flowering stream of Pactolus he remained for long, that there might be sweet water for after his king's dinner that he brought himself, Bacchus was lashed with anxiety as the boy remained so long apart.

The keyword here is ἐπιδόρπιον, a direct quote or "motto" from the Theocritus text:[25]

> κῷχεθ᾽ Ὕλας ὁ ξανθὸς ὕδωρ ἐπιδόρπιον οἴσων
> αὐτῷ θ᾽ Ἡρακλῆι καὶ ἀστεμφεῖ Τελαμῶνι …
>
> And blond Hylas went to bring water for after dinner for Heracles himself and for unflinching Telamon …

ἐπιδόρπιον is a rare word: Nonnus' use of it in this context immediately recalls the Theocritean source, as does the repetition of phrasing αὐτὸς ἑῷ βασιλῆι φέρων / οἴσων αὐτῷ θ᾽ Ἡρακλῆι, though with careful variation: αὐτός is Ampelus, and he actually brings the water—Hylas' intention to do so is never fulfilled. Theocritus' carefully delineated bucolic setting is reduced to a simple phrase (and collective allusion) in παρ᾽ ἀνθεμόεντι ῥεέθρῳ. Nonnus' reader knows that Dionysus has reason for concern (ἱμάσσετο … ἀνίῃ, a play on both Sappho and erotic epigram), as Hylas never returned—in his case κούρου νόσφι μένοντος acutely captures what finally became of Heracles' beloved. Nonnus is effectively here not only alluding to Theocritus' text on multiple levels, but creating his own *through* his reading of Theocritus' poem, and his own narrative of love for a dead ephebe, one untimely loved.[26]

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25 On the use of the "motto" a classic now is Cavarzere 1996.

26 The reader interested in pursuing the Ampelus episode is encouraged now to begin with N. Kröll 2016, available as both a book and a downloadable file from de Gruyter (https://www.degruyter.com/view/product/449537).

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CHAPTER 5

Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* and the Latin Tradition: The Episode of Ampelus

Katerina Carvounis and Sophia Papaioannou

1 Introduction

The influence of Hellenistic poetry on Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* has attracted increasingly more attention in recent years, and exploration of this influence has enriched our interpretative perspective of Nonnus' epic.[1] This perspective can be further enriched, we would like to argue, by considering Nonnus' engagement with the Latin literary tradition, especially that of the neoteric and Augustan era, which draws heavily on Hellenistic poetry. Taking as our springboard Gennaro D'Ippolito's review (in this volume) of the main parameters of this question, we shall attempt in the present chapter to cast light on influences on Nonnus from multiple models from the wider literary tradition, including both Hellenistic and Latin poetry.

The story of Dionysus and his beloved Ampelus, whose posthumous metamorphosis gives birth to the vine,[2] will be taken here as our case study. Marie-Christine Fayant and Benjamin Acosta-Hughes have recently examined the subtle intertextual play between Dionysus' quest for Ampelus and Apollonius' *Arg.* 1 and Theocritus *Id.* 13, which record the legend of Hylas, whose disappearance caused Heracles to abandon the Argonautic expedition in order to search for the lost youth.[3] Embedded in Nonnus' Ampelus episode is another amatory narrative ending in tragic loss, that of Calamus and Carpus, which shares many motifs with the Ampelus story itself, and by association also with the Hercules and Hylas case, most notably the mourning speech of the *erastes* who desperately seeks the (already dead) *eromenos*, though in the case of Calamus and Carpus both heroes are mortals, which constitutes a marked

1 Pioneering to this direction of intertextual approach of Nonnus is Hollis 1976, 1994. See now Acosta-Hughes 2016.
2 For a thorough examination of this episode, see now Kröll 2016. See also Acosta-Hughes in this volume, pp. 108–118.
3 See Fayant 2012; Acosta-Hughes 2016, 524–528.

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differentiation from the other homoerotic pairs. Our parallel exploration of Dionysus' laments in the Ampelus episode (including their echoes with Bion's *Adonis* and Ovid's Venus and Adonis in *Met.* 10) and the embedded story of Calamus and Carpus will be furthered through points of thematic proximity that both erotic accounts share with the story of Nisus and Euryalus in the *Aeneid*.[4]

2 Dionysus and Ampelus, Apollo and Hyacinthus, Venus and Adonis: Nonnus, Bion, Ovid

The episode covering the relationship between Dionysus and Ampelus in *Dionysiaca* 10–12 includes references to other mythological pairs of lovers;[5] in many cases, an accident has killed one of the two partners, with the story of Apollo and Hyacinthus mentioned as the most frequent *comparandum*. The accidental death of Hyacinthus by Apollo's discus is found early on in the tradition,[6] but the myth seems to have become more prominent in the Hellenistic period, especially in the poems by Bion and Euphorion. The description in Bion's fr. 1 of Phoebus treating a fatal wound, which is taken to be that of Hyacinthus, contains strong echoes with that of Dionysus anointing Ampelus' wounds with ambrosia in *Dion.* 11, as well as with Phoebus in *Met.* 10 trying to heal Hyacinthus.[7]

Bion, fr. 1.1–4:

> Ἀμφασία τὸν Φοῖβον ἕλεν τόσον ἄλγος ἔχοντα.
> δίζετο φάρμακα πάντα σοφὰν δ' ἐπεμαίετο τέχναν,
> χρῖεν δ' **ἀμβροσίᾳ καὶ νέκταρι**, χρῖεν ἅπασαν
> **ὠτειλάν**· μοιραῖα δ' ἀναλθέα τραύματα πάντα.[8]

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4 The effect of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* on specific episodes in Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* is further traced in Carvounis and Papaioannou (forthcoming). For a recent parallel reading of the *Metamorphoses* and the *Dionysiaca*, see Paschalis 2014.

5 For a detailed discussion of Nonnus' treatment of mythological examples in the Ampelus episode, see Carvounis 2017.

6 [Hes.] fr. 171 and Eur. *Hel.* 1469–1473: Reed 1997, 135.

7 Reed 1997, 135. Reed 1997, 64 regards this imitation on Nonnus' part as "certain," together with Bion fr. 10.7–8 (cf. *Dion.* 41.273–274) and Bion fr. 14.6 (cf. *Dion.* 16.8). See Mazza 2012, 117 ff. for further discussion.

8 Ed. Reed 1997.

> Dumbfoundedness took hold of Phoebus in such great anguish. He sought out every remedy and plied his skillful craft. He anointed with ambrosia and nectar, anointed the whole wound; but all wounds dealt by fate are incurable.[9]

Cf. *Dion.* 11.241–243:

> Ἀμβροσίην δὲ λαβὼν παρὰ μητέρι Ῥείῃ
> ὠτειλαῖς ἐπέχευεν, ὅθεν νέος εἶδος ἀμείψας
> ἀμβροσίην εὔοδμον ἑῇ μετέθηκεν ὀπώρῃ.[10]

> He brought ambrosia from Mother Rheia and poured it into the wounds, whence Ampelos when he took his new shape passed the fragrant ambrosia into his fruit.[11]

Met. 10.187–189:

> et modo te refovet, modo tristia uulnera siccat,
> nunc animam admotis fugientem sustinet herbis.
> nil prosunt artes—erat inmedicabile uulnus.[12]

> [N]ow he seeks to warm you again, now tries to staunch your dreadful wound, now strives to stay your parting soul with healing herbs. But his arts are of no avail; the wound is past all cure.[13]

Yet from the various myths dealing with *pueros ... dilectos superis* (*Met.* 10.152–153) included in *Met.* 10, it is Venus and Adonis, rather than Apollo and Hyacinthus, with whom Nonnus' Dionysus and Ampelus share more parallels, both in the outline of the myth and, as we shall see below, in specific details between the two texts:[14] Venus' lover, Adonis, is, like Ampelus, mortally wounded by

9 Trans. J.D. Reed.
10 Ed. Vian 1995. For further echoes with these verses in the literary tradition see Vian 2003, 169 (n. on 241–243).
11 Trans. W.H.D. Rouse, here and elsewhere in the chapter, sometimes adapted.
12 Ed. Tarrant 2004.
13 Trans. Miller 1984 here and elsewhere.
14 D'Ippolito (in this volume, p. 23) points out that the care that Ovid's Cyparissus took over the bull (*Met.* 10.123) may have been a model for *Dion.* 11.175–178 together with hints from Vergil's episode of the deer of Rhea Silvia (*Aen.* 7.488).

an animal (a boar), and from his blood springs the anemone (or the rose).[15] There is no explicit reference to this myth in *Dionysiaca* 10–12 except for one mention of Aphrodite and Adonis together in the digression on the Horai in Helios' palace (*Dion.* 11.498–500).[16] However, as D'Ippolito has noted, the narrator dwells on the ephemeral anemone, which is the flower that sprang following the death of Adonis and with which Dionysus adorns Ampelus' dead body[17] (*Dion.* 11.235–237):

> καὶ ῥόδα καὶ κρίνα πάσσε κατὰ χροός, ἀμφὶ δὲ χαίταις,
> οἷα μινυνθαδίοιο δεδουπότος ὀξέι κέντρῳ,
> ἄνθος ἀνηώρησε ταχυφθιμένης ἀνεμώνης.

> [H]e sprinkled roses and lilies upon his body, and hung a garland on his hair of the soon-perishing anemone flowers, as for one fallen too early by a cruel blow.

Limitations of space do not allow for a detailed survey of extended poetic treatments of Adonis' death and Aphrodite's lament from the earlier Greek and Latin traditions that could have served as Nonnus' models; we shall, therefore, confine ourselves to parallels from Bion's *Epitaphium Adonidos* and Ovid's *Met.* 10.503–559 and 10.708–739 that have either seemed to us more compelling or have attracted little or no scholarly attention so far. Daniele Mazza in his doctoral thesis has thoroughly examined the points shared between Nonnus' Ampelus episode and Bion's *Adonis*,[18] and D'Ippolito has drawn attention to some echoes with the Ovidian version.[19] In addition to these parallels, we shall then draw attention to further motifs from the Latin tradition in the overall narrative of the extended episode featuring Ampelus and Dionysus, which may encourage us to take into account a wider literary tradition for the *Dionysiaca*.

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15 In Bion's *Adon.* 64–66, Aphrodite sheds as many tears as Adonis sheds drops of blood, and both sets of fluids become flowers on the ground; from his blood is born the rose, while from her tears grow the anemones. See Reed 1997 on *Adon.* 66 for an alternative version, whereby Adonis' blood gives rise to the anemone. See Buxton 2009, 219–220.

16 *Dion.* 11.498–500 διαιθύσσουσα δὲ πέπλου / ὄρθριον οἰγομένοιο ῥόδου δολιχόσκιον ὀδμήν / διπλόον ἔπλεκε κῶμον Ἀδώνιδι καὶ Κυθερείῃ (and fanned through her robe far abroad the fragrance of the opening rose at dawn. So she wove the merry dance for Adonis and Cythereia together).

17 D'Ippolito 1964, 144, where he argues for the Nonnian episode having been influenced from the legend of Adonis rather than from Bion's work directly.

18 Mazza 2012, 100–104.

19 D'Ippolito 1964, 143–144.

Let us examine the two laments that Dionysus delivers in the course of *Dion.* 11: the first (11.255–312) begins with his contemplating other gods in a similar, but more fortunate, situation before he describes Ampelus' beauty even in death, and he argues that this death could have been avoided, for the god could have provided a chariot for Ampelus to ride; finally, Dionysus ends with thoughts on the inexorability of Hades, who accepts no ransom for the dead. In his second lament (11.315–350), Dionysus asks that Ampelus be given speech to ask Dionysus to stop lamenting; he regrets that he cannot join Ampelus in the underworld because he is a god; and he contemplates how he will punish Ampelus' killer(s).

These laments in *Dionysiaca* 11 take up and amplify Aphrodite's lament for her mortal lover in Bion's *Adon.* 42–61.[20] Both gods ask for one last gesture by the deceased as if s/he were alive:

Adon. 45–46:

> ἔγρεο τυτθόν, Ἄδωνι, τὸ δ' αὖ πύματόν με φίλασον;
> τοσσοῦτόν με φίλασον ὅσον ζώῃ τὸ φίλαμα.[21]
>
> Wake just a little, Adonis, and kiss me again for the last time, kiss me for as long as the kiss lives.[22]

Cf. *Dion.* 11.316–317:

> Ἄμπελον αὐδήεντα τίθει πάλιν εἰς μίαν ὥρην,
> ὑστάτιον καὶ μοῦνον ὅπως ἕνα μῦθον ἐνίψῃ.
>
> give speech again to Ampelos only for one hour, that he may only speak once more to me for the last time …

Moreover, the gods express their sorrow at not being able to join their dead lover who is now in the world below:[23]

20 As Reed 1997, 62, has succinctly put it in providing an overview of the influence of this work, "notably Bionean are his [= Nonnus'] laments for the dead Ampelus (11.248–350) and Hymnus (15.273–19)."

21 Ed. Reed 1997.

22 Trans. J.D. Reed, here and elsewhere in the chapter.

23 Reed 1997 ad loc. draws attention to other *loci* in the Latin tradition where a divinity regrets this distance that his or her immortality imposes from the beloved one: cf. Virg. *Aen.* 12.879–884, Ov. *Met.* 10.202–203 (and 1.661–663).

Adon. 51–53:

φεύγεις μακρόν, Ἄδωνι, καὶ ἔρχεαι εἰς Ἀχέροντα,
πὰρ στυγνὸν βασιλῆα καὶ ἄγριον· ἁ δὲ τάλαινα
ζώω καὶ θεός ἐμμι καὶ οὐ δύναμαί σε διώκειν.

You flee far away, Adonis, and go to Acheron, to a hateful and savage king. Wretched that I am, I live and am a goddess and cannot follow you.

Cf. *Dion.* 11.325–327:

Ὤμοι, ὅτ' οὔ με φύτευσε πατὴρ βροτός, ὄφρά κεν εἴην
σύννομος ἠιθέῳ καὶ ἐν Ἄιδι, μηδ' ἐνὶ Λήθῃ
Ἄμπελον ἱμερόεντα δεδουπότα μοῦνον ἐάσσω.

Alas, that a mortal father did not beget me, that I might be playfellow with my boy even in Hades, that I might not leave Ampelos my darling to fall in Lethe alone.

Both immortals comment on the inexorability of death:

Adon. 54–55:

λάμβανε, Περσεφόνα, τὸν ἐμὸν πόσιν; ἐσσὶ γὰρ αὐτά
πολλὸν ἐμεῦ κρέσσων, τὸ δὲ πᾶν καλὸν ἐς σὲ καταρρεῖ.

Take my consort, Persephone; for you are much stronger than I, and everything fair flows down to you.

Cf. *Dion.* 11.304, 307:

Ὤμοι, ὅτ' οὐκ Ἀίδης πέλεν ἤπιος …
Ὤμοι, ὅτ' οὐκ Ἀίδης ποτὲ πείθεται …

Alas, that Hades is never kind! … Alas, that Hades is inexorable!

Finally, the gods wonder that their mortal lovers should have approached a wild animal:[24]

24 See Reed 1997, 230 (on *Adon.* 60): "Adonis is θρασύς in *Dion.* 29.135, and his overboldness is implicit in Ovid *Met.* 10.708–9."

Adon. 60–61:

τί γάρ, τολμαρέ, κυνάγεις;
καλὸς ἐὼν τοσσοῦτον ἐμήναο θηρὶ παλαίειν;

Rash one, why were you hunting? Fair as you were, were you so mad as to wrestle a wild beast?

Cf. *Dion.* 11.287–288:

Ὤμοι Ἐρώτων,
τί χρέος ἦν, ἵνα ταῦρον ἀμείλιχον ἡνιοχεύσῃς;

Woe's me for Love! What need was there for you to ride on a cruel bull?

In addition to the bereaved god's lament, Nonnus seems to be drawing on Ovid's narrative of Adonis' death in key points in the narrative leading up to, and immediately following, the death of Ampelus.[25] Not unlike Ovid's Venus, Nonnus' Dionysus too warns Ampelus to beware of wild animals:

Ov. *Met.* 10.545–547:

parce meo, iuuenis, temerarius esse periclo,
neue feras, quibus arma dedit natura, lacesse,
stet mihi ne magno tua gloria.

Do not be rash, dear boy, at my risk; and do not provoke those beasts which nature has well armed, lest your glory be at great cost to me.

Cf. *Dion.* 11.78–80:

Πόρδαλις οὐ κλονέει με καὶ ἀγροτέρης γένυς ἄρκτου,
μὴ τρομέοις στόμα λάβρον ὀρεσσινόμοιο λεαίνης·
μοῦνον ἀμειλίκτοιο κεράατα δείδιθι ταύρου.

25 The parallels that follow are the ones deemed the most striking ones; for further shared points see D'Ippolito 1964, 143.

> I am not troubled about the panther or the jaws of the wild bear; you need not fear the wild mouth of the mountain ranging lioness—fear only the horns of the pitiless bull.

Yet, a hint is given in the narratives of both Ovid and Nonnus that this advice will fall on deaf ears, and both mortal lovers (Adonis and Ampelus respectively) are indeed eventually killed by wild animals:

Met. 10.542–544:

> te quoque ut hos (sc. leones) timeas, si quid prodesse monendo
> possit, Adoni, monet "fortis" que "fugacibus esto,"
> inquit; "in audaces non est audacia tuta."
>
> She warns you, too, Adonis, to fear these beasts, if only it were of any avail to warn. "Be brave against timorous creatures," she says; "but against bold creatures boldness is not safe."

Cf. *Dion.* 11.81–82:

> Ἔννεπεν οἰκτείρων θρασὺν Ἄμπελον· ἠίθεος δέ
> οὔασι μῦθον ἄκουε, νόος δέ οἱ ἔνδοθι παίζων.
>
> So he warned bold Ampelos in compassion: the youth heard the words with his ears, but the mind within him was still at play.

Furthermore, on both occasions the bereaved gods draw parallels with other precedents where a mortal was transformed; for Dionysus it is Apollo and Hyacinthus, while Venus considers the nymph Menthe to argue in her lament for Adonis' posthumous transformation:

Met. 10.728–731:

> an tibi quondam
> femineos artus in olentes uertere mentas,
> Persephone, licuit, nobis Cinyreius heros
> inuidiae mutatus erit?
>
> Or was it once allowed to thee, Persephone, to change a maiden's form to fragrant mint, and shall the change of my hero, offspring of Cinyras, be grudged to me?

Cf. *Dion.* 11.328–330:

Εἰς πόθον ἠϊθέοιο μακάρτερός ἐστιν Ἀπόλλων
οὔνομα παιδὸς ἔχων πεφιλημένον· αἴθε καὶ αὐτός
εἴην Ἀμπελόεις, Ὑακίνθιος ὥς περ Ἀπόλλων.

Apollo is more blest in the youth he loved that he bears the boy's beloved name; O that also I might be Ampeloian, as Apollo is Hyacinthian!

As Forbes Irving notes, Ovid adds the *aition* that the flower resulting from Adonis' death is only a short-lived one because it is destroyed by the wind:[26]

Met. 10.734–739:

nec plena longior hora
facta mora est, cum flos de sanguine concolor ortus,
qualem quae lento celant sub cortice granum
punica ferre solent. Breuis est tamen usus in illo;
namque male haerentem et nimia leuitate caducum
excutiunt idem, qui praestant nomina, uenti.

With no longer than an hour's delay a flower sprang up of blood-red hue such as pomegranates bear which hide their seeds beneath the tenacious rind. But short-lived is their flower; for the winds from which it takes its name shake off the lower so delicately clinging and doomed too easily to fall.

This *aition* seems to be alluded to in the *Dionysiaca*, where the anemone is described as ταχυφθιμένη (*Dion.* 11.237; see above).[27] These closing lines of

26 Forbes Irving 1990, 279.

27 Cf. also *Dion.* 15.355, where the anemone is described as μινυνθαδίη within a list of flowers that have resulted from a posthumous transformation of mortals who have met an untimely death in the aftermath of unfulfilled erotic passion (Narcissus, Krokos, (S)milax): *Dion.* 15.352–356 ὑψόθι τύμβου / ἄνθεα Ναρκίσσοιο ποθοβλήτοιο γενέσθω / ἢ κρόκος ἱμερόεις ἢ Μίλακος ἄνθος Ἐρώτων, εἰαρινὴν δὲ φύτευε μινυνθαδίην ἀνεμώνην / πᾶσιν ἀπαγγέλλουσαν ἐμὴν μινυώριον ἥβην (And give me another grace, the very last: above my tomb let there be flowers of passion-struck Narcissus, or saffron full of desire, or love's flower the bind-weed; and in the spring-time plant the soon-dying anemone, proclaiming to all my youth too soon cut short). On Crocus and (S)milax see also *Dion.* 12.86 μίλακος ἱμείρων Κρόκος ἔσσεται ἄνθος Ἐρώτων. This latter pair is briefly alluded to in Ov. *Met.* 4.283 as one of the unhappy love

Ovid's *Met.* 10, which offer the origin of the anemone, may well have influenced Nonnus directly.[28] To explain this point, let us look (again) at Bion's fr. 1, which, as we saw earlier, was familiar to both Ovid (*Met.* 10.187–189) and Nonnus (*Dion.* 11.241–242). Whereas Bion mentions that Phoebus applied nectar and ambrosia to [Hyacinthus'?] wound in a desperate attempt to heal him, Nonnus' statement that Dionysus applied ambrosia to Ampelus' wounds (*Dion.* 11.241–242 ἀμβροσίην … ὠτειλαῖς ἐπέχευεν) becomes an *aition* for the smell of the vine that is to come: *Dion.* 11.242–243 ὅθεν νέος εἶδος ἀμείψας / ἀμβροσίην εὔοδμον ἑῇ μετέθηκεν ὀπώρῃ. The concluding lines of Ovid's story of Venus and Adonis offer a model for this point: when the goddess sprinkles Adonis' blood with nectar (*Met.* 10.731–732 *cruorem nectare odorato sparsit*),[29] this gesture is not without consequence, for the mixture immediately causes the birth of a blood-red flower, which is the anemone (*Met.* 10.732–739). In this respect then, Nonnus seems to be drawing on Bion's description of Apollo anointing ambrosia on (Hyacinthus') wounds, while adding the consequences of Venus' sprinkling of nectar on Adonis' blood from the end of *Met.* 10 to offer (like Ovid) the *aition* for the smell of the fruit that will become Ampelus, who (like Adonis) was loved by a god but died all too young.

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stories the Minyeides ponder narrating but ultimately pass over in a *praeteritio* typical for Ovid, by which he implies that the story is too well known (or temptingly suggests so). The story involves likewise the unfulfilled love of the mortal Crocus for the immortal nymph Smilax. The particular version of the Crocus-Smilax story is evidently the predominant one, and it is further attested in Serv. Comm. ad Virg. *Georg.* 4.182. An alternative story for Crocus' death is found in two medical texts, Galen, *De com. med. sec. loc.* 9.4 and Philo of Tarsus (Phil. Tars. 13–15 Lloyd-Jones/Parsons); according to this version, Crocus was Hermes' *eromenos* and was accidentally killed by the god in a game of discus. In light of this, it is tempting to argue that Nonnus knew both versions of the Crocus story and wished to allude to both of them by mentioning Crocus and Smilax side by side (version 1) and by listing the death of Crocus, which duplicates the death of Narcissus (version 2), as a comparable case to the death of Ampelus, which is conspicuously cast in the light of the death of Narcissus. On Crocus, see *RE* 11.22 (1922) 1972–1973.

28 Although, as Forbes Irving 1990, 279, mentions, "whether Nicander made use of the same *aition* as we find in Ovid or Servius seems impossible to say."

29 Cf. the description of the dead Crocus according to Philo of Tarsus (n. 27, above): ξανθὴν μὲν τρίχα βάλλε μυρίπνοον ἰσοθέοιο, / οὗ λύθρος Ἑρμεία⟨ι⟩ς ἐν βοτάναις, / κρόκου δε σταθμόν φρένας ἀνέρος.

3 Dionysus and Ampelus, Nisus and Euryalus: Nonnus and Virgil

Beyond Ovid, Virgil's *Aeneid* is also evoked in the Nonnian episode in both the structure of, and details within, the narrative. The turning point in the Ampelus episode is the mission of Ate, goddess of delusion,[30] who appears to the youth in disguise and addresses him with a deceitful speech to please Hera (*Dion.* 11.117 μητρυιῇ Φρυγίοιο χαριζομένη Διονύσου). Ate lists honors and gifts that other gods have bestowed upon their beloved ones, drawing attention to the fact that Ampelus has not received anything from Dionysus, and she persuades Ampelus to ride a wild bull (11.118–154), thus leading him to his death. The motif of a god in disguise appearing before a mortal and persuading him with deceitful speech to undertake a fatal course of action has also been a turning point in the narrative before the birth of Dionysus, when Hera took the form of Peisianassa, Semele's attendant, and persuaded Semele to ask Zeus to appear with his thunderbolts (8.178–263).[31]

The intervention of a god(dess) in disguise to turn abruptly the course of the narrative for the worst recalls that of Iris in *Aen.* 5, who appears to the Trojan matrons shortly after the funeral games for Anchises to urge them to burn their ships (*Aen.* 5.604 ff.), and that of the fury Allecto in *Aen.* 7, as she sends madness upon Amata in order to ruin Latinus' plans for Lavinia's imminent wedding to Aeneas (7.323–405), and then appears before Turnus, urging him to fight against the Trojans (7.406–434) and sending him into a frenzy of rage (7.435–474). Allecto addresses Turnus in the form of Calybe, an elderly priestess of Juno, while Iris talks to the Trojan women in the guise of the elderly Beroe, and both Iris and Allecto are executing Juno's orders (5.606–680, 7.286–340). Markedly, the elderly Beroe, who is Aeneas' nurse, lends her name to the nurse of Semele in Ovid's version of Semele's tragic death recorded in *Met.* 3.253–315; on that occasion, Juno disguises herself as an old nurse named Beroe, and leads her victim, successfully this time, to destruction (cf. Nonnus' Peisianassa in *Dion.* 8.178–263 mentioned above).[32]

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30 According to Hesiod, Ate was the daughter of Eris (*Th.* 226–231) and thus the personification of discord, spoiling the peace and happiness in the lives of Dionysus and his companions.

31 See Carvounis 2014, 22 (with n. 5).

32 On Ovid's deliberate use of both the Virgilian Beroe and the Virgilian Calybe as model for Semele's nurse see Prauscello 2008 and Hardie 1990, 232; Anderson 1997 on *Met.* 3.276–278. For parallels in the two Beroe passages see Bömer 1969, 515–523. In his recent commentary, Barchiesi 2007, 167–168, draws attention to the motif of transformation into an old woman; yet the pattern in Virgil (and Nonnus) seems more clearly defined, as the intervention consistently involves Juno/Hera and a deceitful speech that misleads the intended addressee.

In both instances in the *Aeneid* and in the Ampelus episode, the goddesses in disguise—Iris/Beroe, Allecto/Calybe, and Ate—deploy deceitful speech to manipulate their victims by taking advantage of their respective emotional weaknesses, which in all cases consist of a secret longing that brings them insecurity: for the Trojan matrons, it is the desire to stop traveling and settle, even at the expense of fulfilling their foundation mission, and for Turnus, it is apprehension at Aeneas' arrival and the potential loss of Lavinia to an antagonist; and for Ampelus, it is the desire to drive a wild beast alone as an exclusive gift from Bacchus. In the case of Iris and Allecto, although their speeches are, at first, confronted with rational argument by Pyrgo (5.644–653) and Turnus himself (7.435–444) respectively, the interventions eventually have an incendiary effect upon the listener(s): the Trojan women are led to madness and they set their ships on fire, while Allecto, throwing a burning torch upon Turnus, arouses within him a frenzied lust for warfare.

It is worth noting that Allecto's taunting words alone do not suffice to set Turnus against the Trojans, and that the situation in *Aen.* 5 is saved when Ascanius, followed by Aeneas and the Trojans, intervenes to stop the Trojan women, and Juno is thus cast out of their mind (5.679 *excussaque pectore Iuno est*). In Nonnus, by contrast, the speeches of the disguised goddesses have irreparable consequences: both Semele and Ampelus are led to their deaths as they heed the words of Hera/Peisianassa and Ate respectively. It is, nevertheless, the structure of these episodes as a whole, where a disguised goddess intervenes for Juno, urging a mortal to undertake a fatal course of action, that recalls this narrative feature of Virgil's *Aeneid*.[33]

Prior to Ate's epiphany to Ampelus, the young satyr and Dionysus have engaged in games; of particular interest here is the footrace organized by Dionysus at the end of *Dionysiaca* 10 (10.383–430), where Ampelus competes against Leneus and Cissos. This episode is modeled on the footrace within the funeral games for Patroclus in *Iliad* 23,[34] but there is a distinct difference

33 Ate in her speech (*Dion.* 11.118 ff.) lists a series of *exempla* of other satyrs and divine *eromenoi*, who received special favors and exclusive gifts; this list may evoke Juno's speeches that open the two halves of the *Aen.* (1.37–49; 7.293–322), wherein the goddess' alleged powerlessness is juxtaposed to the success of other deities to impose their will. The intervention of Iris in *Aen.* 5 seems to be an abbreviated account of the other two versions without the rhetorical examples.

34 Nonnus' account, in fact, shares important details with the Homeric race: (a) in both races there are three contestants involved; (b) the fast contestant (the lesser Ajax and the satyr Cissos in the *Il.* and the *Dion.* respectively), who takes the lead from the beginning, eventually slips and loses to another contestant, who is the favorite of a god, following that god's intervention; (c) most importantly, the same simile is used to describe the close dis-

between the two races: in Homer, Odysseus trails Ajax, son of Oileus, during the entire race, and divine assistance (from Athena) comes only after he has prayed for it, moments before the two leading runners cross the finish line, as Odysseus realizes he cannot win the race by himself. Athena then makes Odysseus' limbs lighter and causes Ajax to slip by stepping on cattle dung (*Il.* 23.768–783). Nonnus' Ampelus falls behind from the beginning and stays out of the narrative focus until Dionysus intervenes of his own accord; like Athena, he "breathed strength into him [i.e. Ampelus], and made the boy swifter than the spinning gale" (*Dion.* 10.417–418 ἐνιπνεύσας δέ οἱ ἀλκήν / κοῦρον ἐυτροχάλοιο ταχίονα θῆκεν ἀέλλης), causing the leading runner to slip and fall into the mud (10.421).

Dionysus' intervention at his own initiative, instigated as it is by desire for his *eromenos* to win, is a motif familiar from the Virgilian footrace in *Aen.* 5.286–361 (esp. 5.315–361).[35] The three protagonists there are Nisus and Euryalus (who are the first contestants to come forth and appear from the beginning as a couple of one mind, with their special bond underlined with the nominative plural—a numerical paradox—*primi* at 5.294),[36] and Salius.[37] Nisus darts ahead early on and takes the lead, but he slips midway after stepping on blood from honorary sacrifices. As he falls and realizes he is out of the race, he tries to help Euryalus and so deliberately blocks Salius' path, who was in second place until then; Salius slows down, and Euryalus takes the lead and wins the race (5.317–338).[38] Virgil thus furthers the Homeric model by eliminating the divine/external helper and transferring this function to one of the characters. In this new role Nisus once again takes control of the race, by becoming the director and winning through his *eromenos*, instead of continuing as a contestant.

Like Virgil's Nisus, Nonnus' Dionysus wants his *eromenos* to win; unlike Nisus, however, Dionysus is not a contestant himself but a spectator and the

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tance that separates the first runner from the second (Ajax and Odysseus in the *Il.*, Cissos and Leneus in the *Dion.*), that of the weaver holding the weaving-rod next to her breast (*Il.* 23.760–765 ~ *Dion.* 10.407). See esp. Vian 2003, 78–80, who offers a detailed presentation of the line-by-line correspondence between the Homeric and the Nonnian races (esp. 79 n. 1).

35 D'Ippolito (in this volume, pp. 23–24) also offers a case study drawn from Nonnus' funeral games for Opheltes, and the boxing match in particular (*Dion.* 37.485–546), where it is argued that the poet "took his cue" from Virgil's games in terms of the prize offered (*Aen.* 5.362–484) rather than from Patroclus' funeral games (*Il.* 23.653–699).

36 On the importance of the numerical paradox see Fratantuono and Smith 2015, 350–351 on *Aen.* 5.294 (with earlier bibliography).

37 The footrace in *Aen.* 5 involves seven contestants, but only the first three actually matter, since the remaining four along with several (nameless) others never pose a threat; the Homeric model race had only three contestants (Odysseus, Ajax, and Antilochus).

38 Note that the same verb "emicat" describes first Nisus (*Aen.* 5.319) and then Euryalus (5.337), who thus becomes the new Nisus.

organizer of the race. And yet, he himself took part in the games only a while ago in the wrestling match, where he deliberately let his opponent and lover Ampelus win; the footrace is, therefore, an extension of that wrestling match with Dionysus never having actually left the playground. Nonnus combines the Homeric and Virgilian models by replacing Nisus—a mortal *erastes*/participant, who, upon being eliminated from the race, becomes the unexpected helper of Euryalus and (from a metaliterary perspective) the scriptwriter and director of the footrace—with Dionysus, a divine *erastes*, who is at once (and from the beginning) a participant and spectator, as well as the scriptwriter and director. The projection of Dionysus on Virgil's Nisus is temptingly implied in Lenaeus' brooding after losing the race:[39]

Dion. 10.427–429:

> τὰ δεύτερα δέχνυτο Ληνεὺς
> ζῆλον ἔχων, φθονερὸν δὲ δόλον γίνωσκε Λυαίου
> καὶ πόθον.

> Leneus took the second [prize] full of envy, for he understood the jealous trick of Lyaios and his passion.

Cf. *Aen.* 5.340–342:

> Hic totum caueae consessum ingentis et ora
> prima patrum magnis Salius clamoribus implet,
> ereptumque dolo reddi sibi poscit honorem.[40]

> Hereupon Salius fills with loud clamor the whole concourse of the great theatre and the gazing elders in front, claiming that the prize wrested from him by fraud be given back.[41]

Dionysus and Ampelus engage in another athletic competition at the beginning of *Dion.* 11, which is absent from earlier athletic games in epic and seems to be an innovation on Nonnus' part—a swimming race.[42] Dionysus allows

39 See Chrétien 1985, 79–80.
40 Ed. Conte 2009.
41 Trans. H.R. Fairclough, G.P. Goold, here and elsewhere in the chapter.
42 See D'Ippolito 1964, 132–133, on contemporary "mimi acquatichi" as a source of inspiration for the swim races in the episode of Ampelus.

Ampelus to win in this contest, while he himself rejoices in pretending to lose (11.47–55). When Eros, in the guise of Silenus, approaches Dionysus with a consolatory story about the tragic love affair of Calamus and Carpus, who form another pair of *erastes-eromenos* (11.369–481), he includes within his story an extended swimming race between that pair (11.406 ff.), where, like Dionysus in the narrative frame of that story, Calamus too, the superior athlete, habitually holds back deliberately for his beloved to win (11.419–420 καὶ Κάλαμος πορκέλευθος ἑὴν ἀνεσείρασεν ὁρμήν, / ἠιθέῳ δ' ὑπόειξε). Prior to this swimming race, Eros/Silenus had briefly mentioned a footrace (11.400–405), which, together with Calamus' deliberate fall (11.404 Κάλαμος ταχύγουνος ἑκούσιος ἤριπε γαίῃ), is likely to be a Nonnian addition to the story as to echo the accident in the footrace in Ampelus' story. This addition may well be indebted to the footrace in *Aen.* 5 and Nisus' fall, which led to the victory of Euryalus, as we saw above (cf. *Aen.* 5.335–336).[43]

There may well be further debts within Eros/Silenus' story to the relationship of Nisus and Euryalus as it unravels in *Aen.* 9. The fatal swimming race between Carpus and Calamus leads to the drowning of the former and the dramatic speech and suicide of the latter. Calamus' aporetic pathos for the loss of Carpus is evocative of Nisus' anxiety in *Aen.* 9, where both Nisus and Euryalus die in a doomed expedition to bring Aeneas back to the Trojan camp (*Aen.* 9.176–502). Like Calamus, Nisus first realizes that Euryalus is missing and that he has not followed his lead out of the Rutulian camp and away from the pursuit of the Volsci:

Aen. 9.390–391:

> Euryale infelix, qua te regione reliqui?
> quaue sequar?
>
> Unhappy Euryalus, where have I left you? Where shall I follow?

Cf. *Dion.* 11.431:

> Νηιάδες, φθέγξασθε, τίς ἥρπασε Καρπὸν Ἀήτης;
>
> Speak, Naiads! What Wind has caught up Carpus?

43 Camps 1967, 234, argues that Prop. 2.34.33–34, which is a couplet on Maeander's treacherous ("fallax") waters ("unda"), alludes to the drowning of Carpus.

Dion. 11.446–448:

> Δηθύνεις ἔτι, κοῦρε; Τί σοι τόσον εὔαδεν ὕδωρ;
> Κρείσσονα μὴ φίλον εὗρες ἐν ὕδασι, τῷ παραμίμνων
> δειλαίου Καλάμοιο πόθους ἔρριψας ἀήταις;
>
> How long you are, my boy! Why do you like the water so much? Can you have found a better friend in the water, have you thrown to the winds the love of poor Calamus that you may stay with him?

Nisus' reaction upon seeing Euryalus about to fall dead finds a counterpart in Calamus' voluntary suicidal dive in the Maeander (*Dion.* 11.458–463):

Dion. 11.462–463

> Ἀλλὰ πεσὼν προκάρηνος, ὅπῃ θάνε Καρπὸς ἀλήτης,
> σβέσσω θερμὸν ἔρωτα πιὼν Ἀχερούσιον ὕδωρ.
>
> Where Carpus wandered and died, I will fall headlong, I will quench my burning love with a draft of water from Acheron.

Cf. *Aen.* 9.427–430:

> me, me! adsum qui feci, in me conuertite ferrum,
> o Rutuli! mea fraus omnis, nihil iste nec ausus
> nec potuit; caelum hoc et conscia sidera testor;
> tantum infelicem nimium dilexit amicum.
>
> On me—on me—here am I who did the deed—on me turn your steel, Rutulians! Mine is all the guilt; he neither dared nor could have done it; heaven be witness of this and the all-seeing stars! He but loved his hapless friend too well.

Finally, Virgil's epigraphic apostrophe to Nisus and Euryalus—the "most emphatic authorial intervention in the epic"[44]—may be compared to the epigram that Calamus himself, at once a hero and a poet of his own erotic drama, com-

44 Hardie 1994, 153 (on *Aen.* 9.446–449).

poses for the cenotaph that will be built for him and for Carpus together on the banks of the river Maeander:[45]

Aen. 9.446–447:

> Fortunati ambo! si quid mea carmina possunt,
> nulla dies umquam memori uos eximet aeuo.
>
> Happy pair! If my poetry has any power, no day shall ever blot you from the memory of time.

Cf. *Dion.* 11.476–477:

> 'Καρποῦ καὶ Καλάμοιο πέλω τάφος, οὓς πάρος ἄμφω
> ἀλλήλους ποθέοντας ἀμείλιχον ἔκτανεν ὕδωρ'.
>
> I am the grave of Carpus and Calamus, a pair of lovers, whom the pitiless water slew in days of yore.

The outcome of Eros' embedded story of Calamus and Carpus that he purports to offer as consolation to Dionysus has puzzled readers wondering how it relates to the bereft god, who, unlike Calamus, cannot join his beloved one in death, and how it helps illustrate Eros' opening advice to Dionysus to find a new love and forget the old one (*Dion.* 11.356–358).[46] The relationship between Dionysus and Ampelus recalls that of other gods whose young *eromenoi* met an untimely death, which does not apply to Calamus and Carpus. Their double death, however, recalls the deaths of Nisus and Euryalus in *Aen.* 9, whose celebrated friendship is subsequently found as "a canonical example of the devoted pair of friends."[47] Both stories link the double deaths to a context of races: in Eros' story Carpus meets his death during the swimming race, while the episode

45 See Lasek 2009, 76, for the lyrical coloring of this epigram, which is the only one in Nonnus' work that refers to more than one deaths.

46 See Vian 1995, 18–19; Harries 1994, 72, has suggested that the embedded story of Calamus and Carpus puts in words the sort of lament that Dionysus cannot utter, given that he cannot join his lover in death.

47 See Hardie 1994, 31 (with n. 65), where he points to Ov. *Tr.* 1.5.19–24, 1.9.27–34. See also Bion fr. 12.1 Reed Ὄλβιοι οἱ φιλέοντες ἐπὴν ἴσον ἀντεράωνται, where the examples of Theseus and Pirithous, Orestes and Pylades, and Achilles and Patroclus are mentioned. Cf. also Hardie 1994, 154 (on *Aen.* 9.446).

between Nisus and Euryalus in *Aen.* 9 is seen as an extension of the footrace in the funeral games for Anchises in *Aen.* 5. As Hardie puts it:

> In the race of v Nisus, cheated at the last of victory by a fall, uses tricky methods to ensure the victory of his beloved Euryalus; the resulting squabble between the participants is resolved amicably and with a laugh by Aeneas, so that nobody goes without a prize. In ix Nisus has succeeded in the race for his life, when he realizes that he has lost Euryalus; his attempts to save his friend meet with deadly hostility, and nobody wins any prizes.[48]

Refracted, then, through the Virgilian episode of Nisus and Euryalus, the story of Calamus and Carpus thus encourages the reader of the *Dionysiaca* to see in the Ampelus episode both a narrative in the tradition of the *pueros … dilectos superis* and a celebration of friendship and devotion.

4 Conclusion

The caveats mentioned in discussions of poetic influences are also in operation here: a very large part of ancient literature is now lost to us, while parallels from surviving works potentially can be dismissed as *topoi* or attributed to a common source.[49] Yet it is unlikely that a poet in fifth-century Egypt with Nonnus' background and learning, as they emerge from the contemporary cultural context and his own works, should not be familiar (at least) with Virgil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, either in the original or in translation.[50] Beyond this question, however, this chapter has sought to demonstrate that the Latin literary tradition cannot be excluded from explorations of Nonnus' engagement with his models, but that it should rather be considered alongside Hellenistic (and other) literary works. The acknowledgment that Nonnus was aware of the Latin tradition may then broaden our interpretative perspective by assisting us to identify further nuances in the structure of an episode that shares core elements with different stories from the Graeco-Roman tradition.

48 Hardie 1994, 28.

49 Note that Reed 2004 argues that Euryalus' death in *Aen.* 9 is drawing on Bion's poetry.

50 See D'Ippolito (in this volume, pp. 15–17) for a review of the evidence regarding Nonnus' background.

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CHAPTER 6

Nonnus and Coptic Literature: Further Explorations

Gianfranco Agosti

In this chapter, I revisit the issue of the relationship established by Nonnus' poetry with its own society, focusing particularly on Christian Egyptian culture.[1] After the pioneering works of Keydell (especially his article of 1955 on *Kulturgeschichtliches* in Nonnus), Riemschneider (1968), Schulze (1971), and Bowersock (1990), the groundbreaking article by Gigli Piccardi (1998) debunked the predominant vision of a poet reticent about his homeland. Gigli Piccardi collected a range of evidence of Egyptian *Realien* in Nonnian poetry, including adaptations of Egyptian myths, the creation of special links between Egypt, Greece, and Constantinople, and the presence of typically Egyptian views of ritual, geography, and ethnography. Recent commentaries, mainly those on the *Paraphrase*, strengthened and enriched our understanding of Nonnus' engagement with Egypt, demonstrating that our poet assumes the role of the "indigenous participant," unlike Hellenistic poets such as Callimachus or Theocritus who allude to Egyptian *Realien* with the perspective of "exoticizing outsiders."[2] For example, the problematic description of the Baptist's home in the first book of the *Paraphrase* (ll. 59–64 ~ John 1:19), where the poet merges the typical desert setting with his mention of the forest (61 ἐρημάδος εἰς ῥάχιν ὕλης), probably alludes to the Alexandrian Christian landscape familiar to an Alexandrian audience. The Coptic tradition tells us that the *martyrion* of John and Elisha was constructed and consecrated by Theophilus in 397 AD in the Hermes quarter (on the site of the Serapeum), on the site of an isolated κῆπος. This accords well with Nonnus' mention of the ὕλη for the Baptist's home, as I have argued elsewhere.[3]

This is a fundamental issue; we cannot investigate the presence of the background of social, cultural, religious, and everyday life in Nonnian poetry with-

1 For a survey of the main contributions to the problem and a more detailed discussion of some Nonnian passages here mentioned only briefly, see Agosti 2016, 644–646, 651–657; Agosti 2019.

2 I adapt both definitions from Frankfurter 2000, 165, who deals with Greco-Roman attitudes to Egyptian religion.

3 Agosti 2014, 299–304.

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out considering the author's interaction with his audience. It is essential to examine whether and how Nonnus adapted the narrative to his audience's expectations. This chapter explores an aspect of the Egyptian background of Nonnian poetry that remains largely unexplored: the relationship between Nonnus' narrative and rhetorical structures and Coptic culture and literature. A principal caveat is the following: since one of the very few things we know of Nonnus is that he composed and recited his poems in Alexandria, an analysis of possible Coptic influences should aim to distinguish between what the author addressed specifically to his elite Alexandrian audience well versed in Greek culture, and what emerged from the formation of the poet and the contemporaneous cultural world of fifth-century Egyptian society.[4]

In the first half of the fifth century, the Coptic language—regardless of our definition of "Coptic"—was a significant component of multicultural Egyptian society.[5] A number of Coptic literary works were composed, creating an important Christian literature alongside the literary production of the "Hellenes." Recent scholarship has dismissed the idea of a contraposition between a Coptic "national" literature and the Greek literature of the elites, in favor of an interpretive model based on coexistence, multilingualism, and the distinction between language and ethnicity.[6] Coptic literature[7] was a cultural choice, and Coptic works were composed by people who received an education based on the traditional Greek *paideia*.[8]

It is undeniable, however, that the "earliest texts in Coptic are linked to religious groups"[9] and to monastic movement. Near Panopolis, Shenoute (c. 350–465 AD) and his later disciples,[10] while struggling against religious opponents (pagans, Jews, and "non-orthodox" and lukewarm Christians) produced a prodigious literary output in Sahidic, much of which remains unpublished, including sermons, letters, and hagiographies.[11] It is inconceivable that Nonnus was unaware of the monastic movement and its literary activity; as a Christian born in Panopolis, he would have had the opportunity since childhood to interact with Egyptian-speakers and with exponents of the growing monastic

4 On the distinction between Alexandria and Egypt, see, e.g., Fournet 2009a, 75.

5 See, e.g., Wipszycka 1992, 83–121; Fournet 2009b, 418–451; Papaconstantinou 2014; Buzi 2018.

6 This is true also for legal documents: Fournet 2010, 135, and Fournet 2020.

7 Mainly in Sahidic in the first period. Sahidic is considered by many scholars to be a dialect of the upper class, used later by church leaders to unify Egyptian Christianity.

8 See the insightful remarks by Camplani 2015; Buzi 2018; Crevatin 2018.

9 Papaconstantinou 2010, 13.

10 On Shenoute, see López 2013, 131–141; Brakke-Crislip 2015; Van Minnen 2016, 64–66, all with further bibliography. In what follows I partially reproduce Agosti 2018 13.

11 For Coptic hagiographical literature, see the overall survey by Papaconstantinou 2011.

movements. Although he received a traditional Greek education based on classical *paideia*, this does not mean that he lived in an insular world.[12] We cannot know whether and to what extent Nonnus knew Sahidic, nor if he had direct contact with the White Monastery, and sources and intertextual links cannot be identified with certainty, since no systematic exploration of Coptic literature has been conducted by any Nonnian scholar. Nonetheless, we must not overlook the possible influence of Coptic literature on Nonnus, particularly in terms of shared images, ideas, themes, and cultural attitudes. Influence must be conceived in broad terms, especially in view of homiletic and liturgical texts, which were easily subject to oral diffusion and transmission beyond the moment of performance. The circulation and osmosis of concepts, ideas, and images cannot be reconstructed in detail, but allows us to explore the possibility of a common cultural imagination.[13]

We can explore such a possibility, for instance, in the descriptions of violence in which Nonnus is clearly influenced by the tensions of contemporaneous society. In the story of Icarius introducing wine to Attica, the furious reaction of the intoxicated peasants thinking that he poisoned them (*Dion.* 47.116–124) finds a comparandum in the reaction of pagan peasants from a village of the Egyptian *chôra* against the assault on their idols by the holy Macarius of Tkōw (fifth century AD).[14] In Nonnus' verses, the peasants,

> driven by murderous infatuation, charged upon poor Icarios in maniac fury, as if the wine were mixt with a deceiving drug—one holding an iron poleaxe, one with a shovel for a weapon in his hands, one holding the cornreaping sickle, another raising an immense block of stone, while another, beside himself, brandished a cudgel in his hand—all striking the old man: one came near with a goad and pierced his body with its flesh-cutting spike.[15]

12 Van Minnen 2016, 67, whose imaginative reconstruction is entirely plausible: "Now picture this: Nonnus, half a century later, is himself a schoolboy in Panopolis, and Shenoute is speaking at a Christian feast. All schoolboys want to see the old man. What happens? Shenoute addresses the crowd in—what? Sahidic Coptic? Achmimic Coptic? Achmimic is not hard to perform if you work off a Sahidic text. Shenoute addressed the crowd definitely not in Greek. Did Nonnus and the other schoolboys get it? Presumably." On Shenoute and Panopolis, see Emmel 2002; for the role played by monasticism in the emergence of Coptic, see also Fournet 2020, 112–148.

13 Cp. Brakke 2008, 93.

14 I rely here on Agosti 2016, 653–654.

15 Καὶ χορὸς ἀγρονόμων φονίῳ δεδονημένος οἴστρῳ / τλήμονος Ἰκαρίοιο κατέτρεχε θυιάδι λύσσῃ, / οἷά τε φαρμακόεντα κερασσαμένου δόλον οἴνου· / ὃς μὲν ἔχων βουπλῆγα σιδήρεον, ὃς δὲ μακέλλῃ

According to the *Life of Macarius* of the sixth century (a reworking of more ancient materials), the pagans "came out with rods, swords, spears, and axes in their hands."[16] The text then describes the furious reaction of pagan women ("and their wives too went up on the roof of the temple [wishing] to throw stones on us"), in terms close to another passage of the *Dionysiaca* (35.92–96, where Nonnus describes Indian women throwing stones at Dionysiac warriors). This motif, characterized by a tendency to dramatic details and to rhetorical refinement, is exemplary of popular resistance against Christian pogroms in the Egyptian countryside.[17] Nonnus probably had firsthand knowledge of such episodes; these were particularly violent in the Panopolitan area because of the activity of Shenoute, who led raids on country villages to eradicate paganism into the 420s.[18] Cases of violent conflict are also well documented for Alexandria.[19] Thus, in describing the reaction of the rural mob against Icarius in terms of contemporaneous violence, Nonnus sets it in a framework familiar to his audience.[20]

The same interpretation befits the vexed passage of the *Dionysiaca* on King Blemys (17.385–397), where the poet characterizes the people of Blemmyes in surprisingly positive terms,[21] and emphasizes their prompt conversion to the

/ θωρήξας ἕο χεῖρας, ὁ δὲ σταχυητόμον ἅρπην / κουφίζων, ἕτερος δὲ λίθον περίμετρον ἀείρων, / ἄλλος ἀνεπτοίητο καλαύροπα χειρὶ τιταίνων, / γηραλέον πλήσσοντες· ἑλὼν δέ τις ἐγγὺς ἱμάσθλην / Ἰκαρίου τέτρηνε δέμας ταμεσίχροϊ κέντρῳ. The English translation is by Rouse 1940.

16 *Paneg*. 5.5 (Johnson 1980, 24, Sahidic version).

17 Frankfurter 2010, 183; and Kristensen 2013, 144, on the "primary value" of these kinds of source "in understanding the construction of a particular kind of narrative of religious confrontation, rather than evidence of historical events". See also Martínez Maza 2014.

18 Although Shenoute's activity was not necessarily against pagans, but also against not orthodox Christians as well, see Alan Cameron 2007, 40–42.

19 Even less violent, paradoxically: see Martínez Maza 2014, who stresses the difference between Alexandria and the countryside. On the turbulent events of the end of the fifth century, see Watts 2010. Incidentally, we lack research on the possible political meaning of Nonnus' preference for Cyril's Johannine commentary (on which see now Spanoudakis 2014a, 18–19). One wonders to what extent such a preference implied support for Cyril's politics against the pagan and Jewish communities of Alexandria.

20 Furthermore, the implicit comparison between Attic peasants and the pagans emphasizes the ideological *arrière-plan* of Icarius' episode, based on the parallelism between Icarius' death and Christ's passion, as Spanoudakis 2007 persuasively argued.

21 Καὶ Βλέμυς οὐλοκάρηνος, Ἐρυθραίων πρόμος Ἰνδῶν, / ἱκεσίης κούφιζεν ἀναίμονα θαλλὸν ἐλαίης, / Ἰνδοφόνῳ γόνυ δοῦλον ὑποκλίνων Διονύσῳ, (woollyhead Blemys, chief of the Erythraian Indians, bent a slavish knee before Dionysos Indianslayer, holding the suppliant's unbloodied olivebranch) *Dion*. 17.385–387, text by Gerlaud 1994, trans. Rouse 1940. It is noteworthy that the name Βλέμυς, considered either an invention by Nonnus or derived from the poem of Dionysius, is attested in a graffito from Thebes (2054 Baillet, see Soldati 2014, 276). I resume here Agosti 2018 15–17, where a more detailed analysis is offered.

Dionysiac cause.[22] The text, which reflects a real, albeit imprecise, knowledge of these people living between the Red Sea and the Nile Valley,[23] has traditionally been solicited for evidence of Nonnus' religious views (cryptopaganism, because the Blemmyes were pagans), or for the chronology of the *Dionysiaca*. The Blemmyes are ubiquitous in Greek and Latin literary and documentary sources from Late Antiquity, because they presented a serious threat to Egypt's southern borders,[24] although recent reassessments of these sources have questioned the idea of a continuous war between the Blemmyes and the Roman Empire. Moreover, peace treaties with the Blemmyes were probably occasional, and made when necessary or possible.[25] If Nonnus somehow reflects the historical situation of Blemmyes,[26] it would be rather simplistic to take his narrative at face value as a historical source; instead, King Blemys' submission in Nonnus reflects a hope rather than historical evidence. In the ideal world of Dionysus, the warlike and dreadful Blemmyes do not behave like the unyielding Indians, and promptly recognize the light of justice and peace. A comparison with a passage from the *Life of Shenute* traditionally ascribed to Besa (fl. 465–after 474) illuminates Nonnus' intentions.[27]

> Then my father, Apa Shenute, wanted to hasten to them on account of the captives whom they had taken. And when he crossed the river to go east after them, those whom he first approached raised their spears, intending to kill him. At once their hands became stiff and dried out like (pieces of) wood; they stood (there, hands) outstretched, and were unable to bend them toward them and were crying out in great distress. Likewise again,

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22 Despite the traditional identification/confusion of Indians and Ethiopians (Schneider 2004).

23 See Gigli Piccardi 1998, 174–178; 2003, 39–40. On the economic relations between Blemmyes and Eastern desert, see also Dijkstra 2014, 313–314.

24 For example, a papyrus codex, dated around 400, preserved the fragments of a Homeric-style poem on a successful Roman campaign against the Blemmyes, and it has been tentatively attributed by Enrico Livrea to the diplomat and historian Olympiodorus of Thebes. See Miguélez-Cavero 2008, 59–61.

25 See Dijkstra 2012 (on literary sources) and 2014; Soldati 2014. For example, the treaty between general Maximinus and the Blemmyes in 452–453 (= *FHN* III, no. 381), was considered a possible *terminus post quem*; see Vian 1976, XVII; Gigli Piccardi 2003, 39, both with further bibliography.

26 As Barthel 2014 pointed out.

27 See also Wipszycka 2009, 637–638. Lubomierski 2007 questioned the traditional attribution, arguing that the *Life* is a collection of encomiastic materials and reflects rather the situation in the sixth or even seventh century. For a reappraisal of Besa's literary corpus, see Behlmer 2009.

> the same thing happened to the rest of the tribe(smen) until he arrived at the place of their king. When that man understood that the power which was with him was invincible, he rose up (and) prostrated himself (and) adored him, saying, "I beseech you, heal the hands of my men." And when he made the sign of the cross over them, their hands were healed at once.[28]

The powerful archimandrite does not hesitate to face a group of aggressive Blemmyes, whom he miraculously defeats, receiving obedience from their king. Neither the hagiographer nor Nonnus faithfully record a historical event, but convey a paradigmatic story shaped by the same rhetorical narrative about the Blemmyes and their relationship to Egyptian society. Giusto Traina aptly speaks of "wishful thinking" for the passage of Besa,[29] a definition also applicable to Nonnian verses. It is debatable whether Nonnus was aware, directly or indirectly, of stories similar to that narrated by Besa, although it seems likely. But, most importantly, in a poem dealing with "Indians" in the broadest and Late Antique sense of the term, Nonnus could not avoid alluding to Blemmyes, who were much more present and threatening than "Indians" to his Egyptian audience. Significantly, he adopts a reassuring triumphalistic narrative, which his audience presumably favored. Critical attitudes toward this passage should therefore be reversed. It is not surprising that Nonnus describes Blemmyes in a positive way; his pacific and devout Blemmyes are imaginary, and he makes them behave exactly as an Egyptian, especially from the χώρα, would desire.[30] Many documents show that the historical situation was quite different, such as the well-known petition of Appion, dated to 425–450 (*P. Leiden Gr.* Z = *SB* 20.14606 = TM 23768).[31] Despite his poem's disjuncture with reality, or more

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28 Trans. R.H. Pierce in *FHN* III, nº 301.

29 Traina 2011, 100: "This was clearly wishful thinking: the anguished inhabitants of the Thebais trusted in the charisma of his holiness, who would free them from the barbarian threat."

30 Cf. the mention of Blemmyes as representatives of the "dreadful barbarians" in Dioscorus poems: see J.-L. Fournet in P.Aphrod.Lit., p. 511.

31 Edition by Feissel-Worp 1988; translation by T. Eide in *FHN* III nº 314. [5] ἐ̣ν μέσῳ τῶν ἀλιτηρίων βαρβάρω[ν] με[τ]ὰ τῶν ἐμῶν ἐκκλησιῶν τυγχάνων τῶν τε Βλεννύω[ν] / [6] μεταξὺ καὶ Ἀνν[ο]υβάδῳ̣ν̣ π̣ο̣λ̣[λ]ὰ̣ς̣ παρ᾽ ἐκείν̣ῳ̣ν̣ ὡ̣ς̣ [ἐ]ξ ἀφα̣[ν]ο̣ῦ̣ς̣ κ̣[ατ]αδρομ̣[ὰς ὑπ]ο̣μένομεν οὐδενὸς στρατιώτου προειστ[α]μ̣ε̣ν̣ου τῶν / [7] ἡμετέρων τόπων. ἐκ τούτου τ̣ῶ̣ν̣ ὑ̣π̣᾽ ἐ̣μὲ ταπιν[ου]μένῳ̣ν ἐκκλησιῶ[ν] καὶ μὴ δυ̣[ν]α̣μ̣ένων μήτε τ̣ο̣ῖ̣ς αὐταῖς προσφεύγουσειν ἐπαμύνειν / [8]προσπίπτω προκυλινδούμενος τῶν θείων ὑμῶν καὶ ἀχράν̣[των] ἰ̣χ̣ν̣ῶ̣[ν ὥστ]ε κα̣[τ]α̣ξιῶσαι θεσπίσαι φρουρεῖσ[θ]αι τὰ[ς ὑπ᾽ ἐμὲ̣?] / [9] ἁγίας ἐκκλησίας ὑπὸ τῶν παρ᾽ ἡμεῖν στρατιωτ̣ῶ̣ν κ[αὶ] πίθεσθ[αι αὐτο]ὺς ἐ̣μ̣ο̣[ὶ καὶ ὑ]πακούειν περὶ πάντων καθὼς οἱ ἐ̣ν̣ Φ̣ι̣λ̣ῶ̣ν̣ οὕτω / [10] καλουμένο̣υ̣ φρουρίῳ̣ τῆς ὑμετέρας Ἄνω Θηβα̣ε̣[ί]δ̣ο[ς κ̣α̣τ̣α̣[σταθέντες] στρατι̣[ῶτα]ι ὑπουργοῦσειν ταῖς ἐν

precisely because of it, Nonnus tells a story that his audience wanted, from a triumphalistic perspective. His version of the prompt conversion of the Blemmyes does not depict the historical situation, but rather exorcises fear and bad memories of it.[32]

The rhetoric of triumphalism and firm opposition is typical of Coptic literature, and it would be worthwhile to explore how far Nonnus' acquaintance with it influenced his narrative discourse. A detailed comparison of the rhetorical and stylistic features of Shenoute and Nonnus would contextualize important features of Nonnian poetry such as the poet's fondness for catalogs, pathetic speeches, and invectives.[33] In the recurrent speeches by Dionysus' enemies throughout the poems (battle exhortations to troops,[34] and speeches addressed directly to Dionysus), and especially in the boasting speeches of Pentheus, the core argument is always that Dionysus is not a god, but a sorcerer, a man pretending to be a god.[35] When Pentheus in 44.16 utters οὐ δέχομαι βροτὸν ἄνδρα νόθον θεόν (cf. 45.80, 46.18), this is part of the rhetoric of abuse, which Nonnus skillfully employs as the manifestly weak counterargument of the encomium. As Laura Miguélez-Cavero has remarked, "in the eyes of the reader, characters accusing Dionysus of not being a god have no credibility, as his conception and birth have been recounted in the first books of the poem."[36] This is a well-known rhetorical strategy based on classical literary antecedents, the

Φιλῶ(ν) ἁγίαις τοῦ Θεο̣[ῦ] / [11] ἐκκλησίαις. οὕτω γὰρ δυνησ[ό]μ̣εθ̣α ἀδε[ῶς ζῶ]ντες … ("Since I find myself with my churches in the midst of those merciless barbarians, between the Blemmyes and the Annoubades, we suffer many attacks from them, coming upon us as if from nowhere, with no soldier to protect our places. As the churches in my care for this reason are humiliated and unable to defend even those who are fleeing for refuge to them I prostrate myself and grovel at your divine and unsullied footprints so that you may deign to ordain that the holy churches [under my care] be defended by the troops (stationed) near us and that they obey me and be placed under my orders in all matters just as the troops stationed in the garrison of Philae, as it (10) is called, in Your Upper Thebaid serve God's holy churches on Philae. For in that way we shall be able to live without fear and pursue").

32 The reassuring perspective is a typical feature of Christian writings, happily defined by Averil Cameron as "stories people want" (Averil Cameron 1991).

33 Cf. Shisha Halevy 2011; Sheridan 2007; Muehlberger 2019, 109–115, where she considers Shenoute's rhetoric in the broadest framework of the classical education of Christian writers. In the effective words by Brakke-Crislip: "The learned character and rhetorical brilliance of [Shenoute's] writings suggest that he received the education in grammar and rhetoric that any young man from a prominent family of Panopolis would have enjoyed" (2015, 3).

34 For an insightful treatment, see Verhelst 2016, 82–138.

35 For a thorough analysis, see Miguélez-Cavero 2010, 31–34.

36 Miguélez-Cavero 2010, 32.

psogos' rhetorical rules, and anti-Christian polemical language (as used by Celsus or the Emperor Julian in fr. 64 of his *Against Galileans*;[37] note that νόθοις θεοῖς is already employed by Cyril *in Jul.*). Within the poet's contemporaneous world, one of the best-known moments of Shenoute's activity against paganism in Panopolis, the Gessios *affaire*, concerns the defeat and humiliation of a rich pagan landowner.[38] He is never named in the extant works of Shenoute (he is simply labeled "impious, faithless, or godless-man, fool, wretch, child of pestilence, sinner," or just "that man"),[39] but he is called Gesios in the bohairic *Life of Shenoute*. He is probably to be identified with Flavius Aelius Gessius, *praeses Thebaidos* in 376–378.[40] The rich dossier is complex, partly because of the unsatisfactory editorial state of Shenoute's works.[41] According to Emmel's reconstruction,[42] Gesios had attempted to convince Shenoute that he had given up his pagan beliefs. The skeptical Shenoute raided Gesios' house, where he discovered a household shrine full of idols which he later removed. After a second visit to Gesios' house, Shenoute composed a violent sermon *Not because a Fox Barks*, castigating his paganism,[43] and he eventually raided Gesios' house again. Shenoute depicts Gesios as a fiery opponent of Christianity, who used to publicly deny the divinity of Jesus.[44] The archimandrite often recalls that Gesios repeatedly blasphemed against the Father and Jesus, questioning their divine nature, "not only in private but also in the

37 Cf. Wilken 2003, 179 quoting Cyril's reply to Julian "we have not made a man into God [τεθεοποιήκαμεν ἄνθρωπον] as you think" (*In Iul.* 6.27.16–17 Kinzig-Brüggemann).

38 I resume here again Agosti 2018, 17–18.

39 See Emmel 2008, 99.

40 See Emmel 2008, 166.

41 See Brakke-Crislip 2015, 193–199, with the English translation of the dossier (201–296).

42 Emmel 2008, 171–173.

43 See Torallas Tovar 2015 (study and Spanish translation); English translation in Brakke-Crislip 2015, 201–204.

44 For example, in a sermon against rich people Shenoute tells how he caught Gessius attempting to reconsecrate the temple of Atripe: "I caught him in the temple of Atripe when he was worshipping Satan and pouring libations to him. He scattered roses and peach-twigs and bunches of vine leaves and other fragrant plants in that place, after we had burned that idolatrous place with fire, along with all the furnishing in it. Obviously I'm not saying these things secretly; rather, I really want, if some of you are familiar with him, that he be informed that I often pronounce multitudes of curses upon him, along with many words from the anger of the wrath of the God Jesus. That defiled one immediately spat at him (Jesus) … and he blasphemously said that the great deeds that the Lord of All, Jesus, Apollonius of Tyana and Plato did as well": A26, in Behlmer 1996, 91–93, trans. Brakke-Crislip 2015, 238–239 (abbreviations of Shenoute's works according to Emmel 2004). See also López 2013, 106.

agora and on the streets."[45] Although the exact date of the confrontation with Gesios is unknown and disputed, Shenoute mentioned the death of Gesios in the sermon *God is Blessed* around 440 AD, and Nonnus was likely aware of this story concerning one of his fellow citizens. Gesios was imbued in the Hellenic *paideia* as an elite member of society, and his statement might also have been echoing an adoptionist or subordinationist Christological formula, rather than broadcasting paganism.[46] Thus, the portrait of Gesios and his impious utterances should be regarded as part of Shenoute's "strategy in local politics and in his writings, rather than part of any independent reality," as Roger Bagnall has argued.[47] This renders the portrait of Shenoute even more significant for our purposes. Shenoute conveys a biased idea of Gesios as a champion of paganism using the same rhetorical paraphernalia and the language of abuse and mockery which are reversed in Nonnus' depictions of Dionysus by his rivals, especially Deriades and Pentheus.[48] This is not a scenario of direct derivation; Nonnus did not take the vocabulary of abuse from Shenoute's characterization of a hardline pagan. As in the passage on Blemys, both Nonnus and Shenoute share a rhetorical discourse. In his invectives, Nonnus combined classical rhetoric and literary models with the attitude of Christian polemic that was familiar to him and his audience. Coptic literature and especially the works of Shenoute display the other side of the transformation of the iambic idea in Late Antiquity, and its fate in Christian literature[49]—a side with which Nonnus was very familiar because he had been educated in Panopolis, and because the antipagan politics and propaganda of Shenoute in Upper Egypt were connected with those of Cyril in Alexandria (according to tradition,

45 A26, ed. by Behlmer (1996) 91–93; D4.1, *The Lord thundered*, in ShA1, p. 379; LB 88 (trans. Bell, pp. 67–68); *Let our eyes*, in MS WW 34; D5.5, *God says through those who are his*, in MS GF 261–262. This list is from López 2013, 197 n. 65. See now Brakke-Crislip 2015, 20–23, 193–199, and their translation of this sermon.

46 This is the interpretation by Emmel 2008, approved by Bagnall 2008, in opposition to the more traditional picture preferred by other scholars. See also Brakke-Crislip 2015, 197: "Shenoute's attribution to Gesios of the idea that Jesus was a divine man similar to Plato and Apollonius of Tyana suggests how people like Gesios may have seen devotion to Jesus as not entirely incompatible with traditional religion and philosophy." For the political and economic reasons that played a role in the conflict, see e.g. López 2013: 102–126.

47 Bagnall 2008, 28.

48 They are reused against them by Dionysus in his counterattacks, of course. On Shenoute's training in rhetoric see, e.g., the statements by Van Minnen 2016, 66 (he "mastered a number of Greek prose compositional forms [from a rhetor?], which he was the first to successfully adopt in Egyptian") or Muehlberger 2019, 94 (who speaks of the "masterful range of rhetorical depiction that Shenoute commanded").

49 Agosti 2001; Hawkins 2014, 142–185, 262–299 on Late Antique "iambic poetics."

Shenoute participated in the Council of Ephesus with Cyril[50]). The poet and the abbot of the White Monastery therefore operated in the same rhetorical world.

The same patterns appear to be valid for linguistic expressions, on which no systematic research has so far been conducted.[51] An intriguing example is that of a Coptic homily on Lazarus attributed to Athanasius, probably dated to the fifth/sixth century, which displays striking parallels with Nonnus.[52] Its author had a good command of rhetorical structures, as Sheridan pointed out.

> The eyes, which had closed so as never to open, opened again filled with light and saw everyone.
> The head, which had been bound with a napkin, loosed itself and became strong again and bowed to Christ.
> The ears, which had been closed by the stroke of death, opened again and heard Christ calling in the tomb in His divine voice.
> His nose, which had been a stranger to the breath of life, functioned again and smelt the sweet odour of Christ.
> The tongue, which had ceased speaking any more, moved again, stretched, and praised God.
> The lips, which had closed so as not to speak again, opened again and spoke with the Son of God.
> The mind, which had dissolved so as not to speak or to think or to be able to see a man to know him or to be able to perceive anything, became strong again and knew the one who had created it.
> All the members, which had decayed and dissolved in the earth, became alive again and ministered to the body.
> The feet, which had been bound so as never to walk, were loosed again and stretched and ministered patiently to Christ Jesus, the Son of God.[53]

50 Cyril (and other Alexandrian patriarchs) is represented in the sixth-century *dipinti* in the north lobe of the Triconch of the Red Monastery (cf. Dilley 2008, pointing out the relations between Shenoutean community and Cyril).

51 For a comparison between *Par.* 15.27–28 (rewriting John 15.7) with the rewriting of the same Johannine verse in a Coptic fragmentary text containing a dialogue between Jesus and the Disciples, the "Apocryphal Gospel" from MS Schøyen 1991 and BN Copt. 131, f. 29 (probably fifth century), see Agosti 2018, 13–14.

52 [Athanasius] *De Lazaro e mortuis reuocato* [*CPG* 2185; *Clavis copt.* 0049; ed. Bernardin 1940; new partial edition and translation in Sheridan 2012, 204–212]. The text is transmitted in a unique ninth century manuscript.

53 Sheridan 2012, 212.

The homily is an exegetical commentary on John 11; the anaphora on the resurrection insisting on the gradual resurrection of the single parts of Lazarus' body shows close similarities with the Nonnian treatment of the same episode (*Par.* 11.157–173), and the resurrection of the dead Lazarus is described according to the technique of body ecphrasis, as in Nonnus.[54]

(a) The single parts of the body which gradually come back to life;[55]

(b) the detail of the nostrils, closely resembling Tylus' resurrection in *Dion.* 25.530 (a passage that closely parallels *Par.* 11, as Spanoudakis demonstrated[56]);

(c) the explicitly declared typological interpretation of Lazarus' resurrection, which Nonnus develops in detail both in book 11 and in book 20 of his Christian poem.[57]

Both Nonnus and the author of the homily use the same rhetorical structures. Aside from possibilities of direct transmission, this mode of presenting the resurrection of Lazarus was common to other exegetical works, whose content circulated by way of the homilies performed in the churches in Panopolis; the poet could have reused familiar exegetical features.

54 εἶπε καὶ ἐσμαράγησε διαπρυσίῃ τινὶ φωνῇ· / ἔξιθι, Λάζαρε, δεῦρο. λιποφθόγγοιο δὲ νεκροῦ / ἄπνοον ἐψύχωσε δέμας νεκυοσσόος ἠχώ· / ἄπνοον ἄνδρα κάλεσσε, καὶ ἔτρεχε νεκρὸς ὁδίτης / στείχων αὐτοκέλευθος ὁμοπλέκτῳ χθόνα ταρσῷ· / ἄπνοον ἄνδρα κάλεσσε, καὶ ἐν φθιμένοισιν ἀκούσας / ἐξ Ἄϊδος νόστησε φυγὰς νέκυς ὄψιμον ἄλλην / ἀθρήσας μετὰ τέρμα βίου παλινάγρετον ἀρχὴν / θαμβαλέην. Ἀίδης δὲ μάτην παρὰ γείτονι Λήθῃ / πανδαμάτωρ ἀδάμαστον ἐδίζετο νεκρὸν ἀλήτην· / καὶ ποδὸς ὀρθωθέντος ἀκαμπέα γούνατα σύρων, / τυφλὴν ἰθυκέλευθον ἔχων ἀντώπιον ὁρμὴν / αὐδήεις νέκυς ἔσκε καὶ ἐκ ποδὸς ἄχρι καρήνου / σφιγγόμενον πλεκτῇσιν ὅλον δέμας εἶχε κερείαις / θερμὸν ἔχων ἱδρῶτα καλυπτομένοιο προσώπου· / καὶ λινέῳ πεπύκαστο καλύμματι κυκλάδα κόρσην, / σουδάριον τόπερ εἶπε Σύρων στόμα ("He spoke and roared out in a penetrating voice: 'Emerge, Lazarus, come hither.' And the dead-arousing resonance animated the lifeless body of the voiceless dead man. He summoned a lifeless man and he came running, a dead man walking, making his own way on the ground with feet bound together. He summoned a lifeless man and from amongst the dead he heard and returned from Hades, a runaway corpse, observing after the end of life in late order another recovered astounding beginning. In vain did Hades the all-tamer seek by neighboring Lethe the untamed corpse unleashed. And set upright on his feet, dragging his unbending joints and maintaining a blind straight-pathed forward rush, he was a speaking corpse; and from head to foot he had his whole body tightly bound with coils of swathing-bands while a hot sweat appeared on his covered face. His round head was enwrapped by a linen veil which speakers of Syriac call *sudarium*", text and translation by Spanoudakis 2014).

55 This belongs to a well-established tradition of the homilies on Lazarus; Spanoudakis was able to gather extensive evidence from Greek and Syriac texts in his excellent edition (Spanoudakis 2014a, 18–23 and *passim* in his commentary).

56 Spanoudakis 2014b, 356.

57 See Spanoudakis 2014a, 92–96.

I think that also for the dance, one of the most recurrent features of Nonnian poetry,[58] we must look beyond classical and Dionysiac imagery, especially for the *Paraphrase*,[59] as in John 14.28 (εἰ ἠγαπᾶτέ με ἐχάρητε ἄν, ὅτι πορεύομαι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα) and its rewording in *Paraphrase* 14.111–114, where the disciple's joy is expressed through vivid dancing imagery.

εἰ δέ μοι ἀκλινέας φιλίους ἐκεράσσατε θεσμούς,
καί κεν ἀγαλλομένοιο ποδὸς σκιρτήσατε ταρσῷ
ξυνὸν χάρμα φέροντες, ὅτι χθονὸς οὖδας ἐάσας
ἵξομαι ὀψικέλευθος ἐμῷ πέμψαντι τοκῆι

If you were joined to me by binding laws of love,
Then you would celebrate with bounding leaps of joy,
And share in the delight when I depart this earth
At last returning to my Father, who sent me.[60]

The disciples ought to express their joy "with bounding leaps" (σκιρτήσατε), and to share their delight (ξυνὸν χάρμα φέροντες). The adjective ξυνὸς draws on its doctrinal meaning of the joy shared by all people living in Christ, but it literally indicates that the disciples should all dance together. This recalls the image of Christ dancing in the gnostic section of the *Acts of John* (second century), where the apostles dance in a circle around him.[61] Nonnus had some knowledge of this text, as shown by the story of the dead Bacchant and the anonymous Indian in *Dion*. 34.[62] Its presence is attested among fourth-century

58 See now Cadau 2015, 205–221; Schlapbach 2017, 215–222.

59 See Agosti 2019, 18–20.

60 Trans. Prost 2003, 174.

61 *Act. Joh.* 94–96 Junod-Kaestli πρὶν δὲ συλληφθῆναι αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνόμων καὶ ὑπὸ ἀνόμου ὄφεως νομοθετουμένων Ἰουδαίων συναγαγὼν πάντας ἡμᾶς ἔφη· "Πρίν με ἐκείνοις παραδοθῆναι ὑμνήσωμεν τὸν πατέρα καὶ οὕτως ἐξέλθωμεν ἐπὶ τὸ προκείμενον." Κελεύσας οὖν ἡμῖν ὥσπερ γῦρον ποιῆσαι, ἀποκρατούντων τὰς ἀλλήλων χεῖρας, ἐν μέσῳ δὲ αὐτὸς γενόμενος, ἔλεγεν· "Τὸ ἀμὴν ἐπακούετέ μοι". Ἤρξατο οὖν ὕμνον ὑμνεῖν καὶ λέγειν· "Δόξα σοι πάτερ. Καὶ ἡμεῖς κυκλεύοντες ἐπηκούομεν αὐτῷ τὸ ἀμήν" … ("Before He was arrested by the lawless Jews, whose lawgiver is the lawless serpent, he assembled us all and said, 'Before I am delivered to them, let us sing a hymn to the Father, and so go to meet what lies before (us).' So He told us to form a circle, holding one another's hands, and himself stood in the middle and said, 'Answer Amen to me.' So He began to sing a hymn and to say 'Glory be to thee, Father.' And we circled round him and answered him, 'Amen' etc.", trans. R.Mcl. Wilson, from Hennecke-Schneemelcher, NT Apocrypha Engl. Ed. (1992)).

62 For the possible influence of *Act. Jo.* 63–86 on it see Accorinti 2014, 56–57 with further bibliography. On Nonnus' interest in apocryphal literature, see Spanoudakis 2016.

Manichean communities in the Dakhleh Oasis and in the Fayyoum.[63] Other texts also describe apostles forming a circle and dancing around Jesus. The scanty remains of the Coptic so-called *Gospel of the Saviour* (known from a Berlin manuscript published in 1999, and from some fragments in Strasbourg published in 2003) feature a very similar scene, clearly inspired by the *Acts of John*.[64] Also, in 2009, Peter Hubai edited a ninth-century small-format codex from the Qasr el-Wizza monastery in Nubia, with a couple of Coptic apocrypha: the *Wort des Erlöser*, a discourse of the Savior about the Cross, and a hymn entitled *Die Tanze des Erlöser*. Both these texts should be dated from the end of the fourth century, and are probably local products. The *Dance of the Saviour* represents Jesus dancing and singing a hymn on the Mount of Olives, and is clearly based on the *Acts of John*.[65] After the remarks in the *ed. pr.* by Hubai,[66] in an article of 2013, Dilley studied the *Dance of the Saviour* against the tradition of the Christian appropriation of language and symbolism related to Dionysus and to David, focusing especially on the liturgical function of dance in Late Antiquity.[67] Despite the condemnation of dance as a pagan or heretic practice in patristic sources, primary evidence exists regarding the role of dance in liturgical occasions and public ceremonies in Late Antiquity.[68] In Egypt, dance was important in the liturgical practice of the Melitians, but was probably more widespread.[69] It continued to exist within the liturgy of Ethiopian Christianity.[70] Dilley recalls Nonnus as a witness to the popularity of dance imagery,[71] but he mentions only the use of χορός for the disciples in *Par.* 17.89 (where the expression simply means "group"), failing to notice the aforementioned pas-

63 See Piovanelli 2012, 246–247 with further bibliography.
64 See Piovanelli 2012, 232 providing all the relevant bibliographical references.
65 "And one day the Savior sat on the Mount of Olives before the lawless Jews crucified him. We assembled with him. He replied and said, 'O my holy members, gather unto me, and I will sing a hymn to the Cross and (p. 25) you, you will respond after me.' And we [formed] a circle (around him) and turned toward him." Trans. 2012, 240. See Piovanelli 2012, 246; Yingling 2013 on the doctrinal meaning of the dance.
66 See Hubai 2009, 113–116.
67 Dilley 2103, 251 remarks that the message of the dance "spoke to widely practiced forms of piety in the Christian Roman Empire, including both local festivals and imperial rituals."
68 Kahlos 2007. Choruses of virgins singing psalms around the cross: Clark 1999, 365–399.
69 See now Frankfurter 2017, 122–126.
70 Monneret de Villard 1942 already argued for an Egyptian origin. See the entries in the *Encyclopedia Aethiopica* (s.vv. *Aqʷaqʷam* [K. Kaufman-Shelemay, p. 293: "according to oral traditions and iconography, dance was part of Ethiopian liturgical practice from earliest times"], and *Däbtära; Déggw; Danéyela; Qéddase; Zema*). I owe the last references to Alessandro Bausi.
71 Dilley, 2013, 242–243.

sage from book 14, which is much more significant. The *Dance of the Saviour* and the other aforementioned texts remind us that dance was important in Christian doctrine, and was not limited to public spectacles or to official occasions, as with the adventus ceremonies; Nonnus and his Christian audience were familiar with it in everyday life. His fondness for dance imagery and vocabulary should therefore be read from a Christian perspective, and not only as a result of the popularity of pantomime and the traditional Dionysiac character of dance (also often represented in Coptic textiles). The role played by dance in liturgy calls for a deeper exploration of the influence of liturgical language in the *Paraphrase*.[72]

Nonnus was deeply engaged in Egyptian cultural and religious life,[73] and a purely literary approach is not adequate to understand his poetry. Classicists are accustomed to conceive of Nonnus' cultural world in terms of Greek and Latin tradition, and through written sources. However, with the changes in methodological approaches to Late Antiquity and the changes in Nonnian scholarship over the last decades, classicists have realized the significance of figurative arts, Neoplatonic thought and language, and Christian theology in Nonnian poetry. A major factor behind the contemporary attractiveness of Nonnus is his ability to address the modern reader in terms of collapsing cultural boundaries. These boundaries are not only those between Hellenism and Christianity, but also those between literary tradition and living contemporaneous society. His poetry is therefore fundamental to a better understanding of the cultural melting pot of Late-Antique Egypt, and a thorough exploration of Coptic literature would thus be very helpful. Recent research has illustrated Shenoute's debt to the Hellenic tradition,[74] and has demonstrated that it is misleading to posit a neat division between a national and popular Coptic literature and the traditional elite Greek *paideia*. The consequences for Nonnian scholarship are immense. If we want to read Nonnus' poems in their social and cultural context, we cannot omit from consideration an important part of Late-Antique Egyptian society and daily life: the monks and abbots who delivered their sermons in Sahidic, and their listeners, who discussed

72 On the latter aspect, cf. Doroszewski 2014.

73 I developed this point in Agosti 2016.

74 As Brakke-Crislip remarks, "the flourishing of some of the finest (or at least most popular) classicizing poetry from Panopolis gives a sense of the city's intellectual culture and the circles with which Shenoute must have engaged, whether as a youth being educated (if in fact he was educated in Panopolis) or during his forays into the city as a monk and firebrand" (2015, 20).

and spread edifying stories about them.[75] We have to examine Panopolis in order to understand Alexandria.[76]

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75 On monastic written communication, see Choat-Giorda 2016, with further bibliography.

76 I am an absolute beginner in Coptic Studies, and this research requires to be conducted in collaboration with a specialist; my colleague Paola Buzi (Rome) and I hope to pursue this project in the coming years. For their comments and remarks on drafts of my article, I am very grateful to Domenico Accorinti, Alessandro Bausi, Paola Buzi, Alberto Camplani, Cosetta Cadau, Jean-Luc Fournet, Enrico Magnelli, and Konstantinos Spanoudakis.

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PART 2

Literary Structure and Motifs in the Dionysiaca

CHAPTER 7

Visualizing Actaeon: The Motif of Recognition in Nonnus' Treatment of the Metamorphosis

A. Sophie Schoess

ἀπολομένου δὲ Ἀκταίωνος οἱ κύνες ἐπιζητοῦντες τὸν δεσπότην κατωρύοντο, καὶ ζήτησιν ποιούμενοι παρεγένοντο ἐπὶ τὸ τοῦ Χείρωνος ἄντρον, ὃς εἴδωλον κατεσκεύασεν Ἀκταίωνος, ὃ καὶ τὴν λύπην αὐτῶν ἔπαυσε.

Actaeon being gone, the dogs sought their master howling lamentably, and in the search they came to the cave of Chiron, who fashioned an image of Actaeon, which soothed their grief.

APOLLODORUS, *Library* 3.4

The spectacle of Actaeon's death, his being torn apart by his own dogs, is central to classical and Late Antique treatments of the myth. That his crime came to be seen as a visual transgression against Artemis further strengthened the long-established links between treatments of the myth in literature and in the visual arts.[1] Apollodorus' account of Actaeon's crime and punishment culminates in these moments of pathos centered on a visual representation of the young hunter.[2] Here, as in earlier classical accounts of the myth, Actaeon's dogs, at once his most loyal companions and his murderers, occupy a prominent place.[3] They are portrayed as so distressed by their master's death that they

1 See below, pp. 163–166.

2 The text and translation used here are taken from Frazer 1921. The text of Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* is taken from Chuvin 1976, the translation adapted from Rouse 1940.

3 Consider, e.g., the lengthy catalog of dogs in Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 3.206–227 and 3.232–233 and Hyginus, *Fabulae* 181, both based on Hellenistic models; cf. the incomplete catalog in Apollod. 3.4. On the dogs' role in Actaeon's death, see, e.g., Ovid *Met.* 3.249–252; Apollod. 3.4; Nonn. *Dion.* 5.325–335 (cf. 5.390–391) and 5.442–454 (cf. 5.401). Compare early depictions of the punishment of Actaeon, e.g., *LIMC* s.v. Aktaion 34 and 81.

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roam the lands until they are soothed in their grief by Chiron,[4] who creates for them an image of the young hunter. Here, the image's sole audience is Actaeon's dogs,[5] and to them it brings comfort as well as a focus for their grief. We are not told in what shape Actaeon is represented in Chiron's image, though we can infer from their response that he must have been recognizable to his dogs. At the very least, therefore, some of his features must have been human to allow the dogs, deceived by the changed form of the stag in reality, to recognize their former master in the image. We can, moreover, deduce that, however much of the rest of his body this image may depict, it renders Actaeon's face, his most distinct and recognizable physical feature. It is this feature, the human face, that Actaeon's image in Nonnus' account focuses on, and it is through its representation as human that literary and artistic conventions converge.

In the *Dionysiaca*, it is Actaeon who introduces the idea of a visual representation of himself, requesting one such image to adorn his burial site in the form of a grave stele. Following his death, Actaeon's spirit visits his father in a dream, giving him instructions for his burial and the erection of a monument in his memory, a monument that is to depict the metamorphosed Actaeon, but in a hybrid state; his human head is to be juxtaposed with his animal body (*Dion.* 5.520–532). The human audience of Nonnus' image, unlike Apollodorus' dogs, is expected to comprehend the significance of the metamorphosis and to engage with it emotionally. By including an image in his narrative, Nonnus, much like Apollodorus, engages with the visual tradition of depicting Actaeon's crime and punishment,[6] as well as with ideas about viewers' responses to what they see.

Nonnus' Actaeon narrative has attracted considerable scholarly attention, especially with regard to its intertextual dialogue with earlier versions of the myth, most importantly with Ovid's in the *Metamorphoses*,[7] but also with

4 Cf. Nonn. *Dion.* 5.447–461.

5 The passage discussed here is not complete in its transmitted form. It is therefore possible that the original made mention of human responses to the image or of the image's later life.

6 Other literary treatments also engage closely with the visual arts: e.g., Ovid *Met.* 3.138–252 and Apul. *Met.* 2.4.

7 Beginning with Julius Braune's study *Nonnos und Ovid* (Braune 1935), scholars have often discussed the two Actaeon episodes with an eye either to arguing for a direct link between Ovid and Nonnus based on their similarities, or to contesting such a link by focusing on the discrepancies. In his discussion of the Actaeon episode, Michael Paschalis argues that while Nonnus might well have been familiar with the Ovidian text, it is unlikely that he used it as a source (Paschalis 2014, 97). Most recently, Berenice Verhelst has convincingly argued that Nonnus adapts, and responds to, Ovid's treatment of Actaeon's myth (Verhelst 2018); see also Casanova-Robin 2003, 75–107. For a more extensive bibliography on the Ovidian question, see, e.g., Verhelst 2018; Carvounis and Papaioannou in this volume, pp. 120–128.

regard to its intratextual references to other episodes in the *Dionysiaca*.[8] It is to the visual aspects of this episode that I draw attention in this chapter, and it is with these in mind that I consider its position in the *Dionysiaca* as a whole, along with its relationship to earlier literary treatments of Actaeon's myth. I begin by placing Actaeon's crime and punishment in the context of two other episodes in the *Dionysiaca* that similarly explore motifs of innocence and guilt, of seeing and of being seen, and of reversed fortunes in visual terms: the Pentheus and Aura episodes (*Dion.* 44–46 and 48.241–947). Having drawn attention to the importance of visuality in these three related episodes, I then turn to the visual context of the grave stele's image. Throughout, I highlight the visual clues that Nonnus provides and that prepare the reader for the hybrid image of Actaeon's grave stele and its visual challenges. This inquiry ends with a discussion of Actaeon's self-conscious reflections on his transformation, reflections that find their final expression in his image, and of the reader's privileged view of the narrative as a whole. It is, I argue, through this engagement with the visual arts and with their role in representing literary narrative that Nonnus confronts his readers with their own acts of reading and viewing, their seeing images through texts, and their "reading" texts through images.

1 Visual Transgressions in the *Dionysiaca*: Actaeon, Aura, and Pentheus

From the very beginning of Nonnus' Actaeon episode, the violent or violating gaze is a prominent motif; it lies at the core of Actaeon's crime and it is part of the punishment for his transgression. Following the tradition firmly established in Callimachus' *On the Bath of Pallas* and explored in detail in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Nonnus' Actaeon is guilty of having seen Artemis naked.[9] Unlike Ovid's Actaeon, however, whose innocent intentions are heavily emphasized (*Met.* 3.141–142),[10] Nonnus' Actaeon does not simply stumble upon the goddess, but gazes greedily at her exposed body (*Dion.* 5.303–311, 432–441, and 473–488). Nonnus plays with the reader's expectations of Actaeon's guilt,[11] revealing increasingly more damning information about Actaeon's actions. Though Actaeon's motivation provides the focus for the narrative, the ferocity of his

8 See, e.g., Paschalis 2014, 112–122.
9 An earlier tradition, e.g., in Euripides' *Bacchae* 337–342, saw Actaeon's crime in his boasting about his superior hunting skills; see Schlam 1984.
10 Cf. Ovid *Tristia* 2.103–108.
11 Cf. Ovid *Met.* 3.253–259.

visual violence against Artemis, too, becomes increasingly evident. His guilt is intertwined with her status as a virginal goddess, and his gaze is responsible for the erotic display of her body in Nonnus' account.

In her study of links between viewing and desiring in Pompeian wall paintings, Verity Platt shows that, in paintings depicting her encounter with Actaeon, the figure of Artemis is often modeled on representations of Aphrodite in the nude. The crouching Venus, in particular, is drawn on, a statue type that simultaneously seduces the viewer and holds them at bay.[12] Visually linked with Aphrodite, Artemis' body is displayed in an explicitly sexualized way in many of these paintings, marking the visual transgression of Actaeon—and of the external viewer—as a form of sexual violence that can hardly be considered innocent.[13] In the *Dionysiaca*, similar links between gazing and sexual violence are frequently drawn, Actaeon's violation of Artemis being only one such example. And although not all such visual violations reflect artistic conventions, they all share an interest in vivid *ekphrasis* that compels the reader to visualize the scene, persistently underscoring the voyeuristic act.[14] Throughout the *Dionysiaca*, male desire in particular is driven primarily by vision, from the first glance to the visually penetrating gaze. Zeus and Dionysus are the two figures most often associated with such narratives,[15] though a few mortals, most prominently Hymnos and Morrheus,[16] also engage in unrestrained gazing.

Actaeon's narrative, however, differs profoundly from those of Dionysus and Zeus, as he—an ultimately powerless mortal—catches sight of and comes to desire a powerful goddess. While Actaeon himself makes reference to the Teiresias narrative familiar from Callimachus (*Dion.* 5.337–345),[17] it is within the *Dionysiaca* that we find the closest parallel to Actaeon's crime, namely Aura's violation of Artemis in book 48. Throughout this episode, Aura's figure is explicitly de-feminized, and her gaze is characterized as male, as penetrating,[18] casting her violation of Artemis as overtly sexual. Much like Actaeon, Aura does not

12 Platt 2002, 99–100; cf. Bal 1991, 138–176.

13 Throughout classical literature, Artemis and her companions are vulnerable to sexual violence, marking any intrusion, however innocent in intention, as a potential threat; see Heath 1991.

14 On *ekphrasis* in the *Dionysiaca*, see, e.g., Agosti 2014; Miguélez-Cavero 2014; Whitby 2017. On ancient *ekphrasis* more generally, see, e.g., DuBois 1982; Webb 1999, 2009; Elsner 2002.

15 E.g., Nonn. *Dion.* 5.586–621 and 47.273–294 respectively.

16 Nonn. *Dion.* 15.204–369 and 33.172–35.78 respectively.

17 See, e.g., Verhelst 2018, 777–778 on Nonnus' engagement with Callimachus' *On the Bath of Pallas*.

18 As Schmiel 1993 shows, Aura's gazing at and touching of Artemis' body are in line with male behavior in the *Dionysiaca*. Cf. Schulze 1966; Lightfoot 1998; Hadjittofi 2008.

violate the goddess through inappropriate gazing alone, but also through an insolent insistence on transgressing boundaries of propriety and social norms in the broadest sense. Aura and Actaeon are guilty not simply of trespassing against a figure of higher standing,[19] but of trespassing against an Olympian goddess, and in so doing they break a taboo. The visuality of their crimes creates an important intertextual link with Callimachus' *On the Bath of Pallas* (100–102), where Athena invokes the ancient law of Cronus protecting the divine body from the uninvited gaze. That Aura adds inappropriate touch to her visual penetration (*Dion.* 48.349–350) serves to underscore the sexual and physical threat inherent in the gaze.

Actaeon and Aura are connected further, in particular through Artemis' fulfillment of their punishments. Artemis delights in the pain she inflicts in both cases, gazing greedily at the destruction her vengeance causes as she directs her own gaze against the perpetrators (*Dion.* 5.332–335; 48.749–785, 829–847). Though the punishments differ in form, their effect is remarkably similar. In Actaeon's case, the spectacle of his death is prolonged by Artemis' reining in of the dogs' madness, and in Aura's case, the period between rape and birth provides Artemis with ample opportunity to tease Aura, to revel in her suffering, and to watch her punishment come to fruition.[20] While both immensely violent, these punishments are also highly visual, as the gazing perpetrators become spectacles themselves. The physical act of punishment is set in motion by Artemis, with Actaeon's dogs and Dionysus acting as her agents. Both are driven by visual impulses: Actaeon's dogs are deceived by their master's changed body and launch at it ἄφρονι λύσσῃ, in a crazed frenzy (*Dion.* 5.330–331), while Dionysus, hit by Eros' arrows, is enticed by glimpses of Aura's body (*Dion.* 48.483–486). In both cases, the punishment is aimed at the most vulnerable aspect of the perpetrators' personalities, at their greatest pride: Actaeon's hunting prowess and Aura's virginity.

The narrative of his cousin, Pentheus, also offers parallels to Actaeon's story, parallels already established in Euripides' *Bacchae* (337–342).[21] In the *Dionysiaca*, both men commit visual crimes against divinities and are punished in turn, each transformed from spy to espied. In the *Dionysiaca* as in the *Bacchae*, gazing is an essential part both of the crime committed by Pentheus and of the

19 Though Aura is herself a Titan, Artemis' wrath renders her powerless. Compare these hierarchies in the divine sphere with those in Greek society, where members of higher social classes were afforded additional legal protection from members of lower ones; see, e.g., Hunter 1994 and Kamen 2013, both with bibliography.

20 See Schmiel 1993, 475–476.

21 See Paschalis 2014, 112–122.

resulting punishment inflicted on him by Dionysus. The Theban king's desire to see the rites of Dionysus leads to his spying on his mother and her fellow maenads, who espy him in turn and tear him apart. The reversal of gazes does not, however, end here, as Pentheus' dismembered body is later displayed as a hunting trophy by the maenads (*Ba.* 1165–1284; *Dion.* 46.217–218). Actaeon's and Pentheus' crimes, while linked together in this way already in earlier literature, are even more closely connected in the *Dionysiaca*, as Nonnus' Actaeon follows in Pentheus' literary footsteps and climbs a tree in order to be able to see more clearly the forbidden sight (*Dion.* 5.303–307 and 475–481). The question of Actaeon's guilt is addressed twice in the *Dionysiaca*, first through the narrator's voice, then, and more forcefully so, through Actaeon's own. Nonnus' emphatic highlighting of Actaeon's guilt agrees with the earliest Greek accounts of the myth as well as with other Late Antique treatments, but is opposed to Ovid's insistence on the young hunter's innocence.[22] Actaeon's almost excessive guilt in the *Dionysiaca* is evidently modeled on Pentheus' traditional voyeurism,[23] while also being distinguished clearly from Teiresias' accidental gaze in Callimachus' *On the Bath of Pallas*.

Aura's crime, unprecedented in classical literature, is almost identical to the Callimachean voyeurism of Actaeon and Teiresias, but its force more closely resembles that of the Euripidean Pentheus. Her transgression is marked as even more problematic, however, because of her betrayal of Artemis' trust; Aura does not trespass into forbidden territory, but violates the goddess from within her trusted circle.[24] Pentheus' desire to catch a glimpse of the forbidden is thus reflected in both the Actaeon and the Aura narratives. In Actaeon's case, it is the secrecy of the act of spying and the delectation in the gaze that recalls Pentheus' encounter with Dionysus and the maenads, while in Aura's, it is the gaze as a means to expose hidden aspects of the divinity. In all three cases, the protagonist affronts a divinity through gazing and visual trespass, and their punishment is made a spectacle in turn. That Actaeon, Pentheus, and Aura are punished for their violations at all very much concerns the relative status of perpetrator and victim, given that divine offenders, such as Zeus and Dionysus, are never punished in the *Dionysiaca*.

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22 In antiquity, the question of Actaeon's guilt was not considered a straightforward one. See, e.g., Barkan 1980, 323–330; Schlam 1984; Lacy 1990.

23 See March 1989 on the possible role of the *Bacchae* in reshaping and refocusing the myth along these lines.

24 Cf. Ovid *Met.* 2.401–530, esp. 460–465, where Callisto's rape and subsequent pregnancy are presented as polluting Artemis' virginal circle.

2 Visualizing Actaeon's Fate: The Grave Stele

Throughout the Actaeon episode in particular, various motifs of gazing are brought into focus. The gaze, as discussed above, can be cast as a powerful instrument capable of unleashing great violence, but it can also prove an unreliable, even deceptive, aspect of human, and animal, experience.[25] Nonnus' audience is invited to follow an often visual path through Actaeon's myth, taking in the many visual clues that culminate in the most challenging one, Actaeon's image on his grave stele. Taking this grave stele as an essential key to the analysis, I highlight below the importance of linking the text to visual culture for a deeper understanding of the passage. It is in this image, I argue, that Nonnus brings together visual and literary motifs and strategies, offering an artistic commentary on the processes of recognition in acts of reading and viewing, and highlighting the complexities inherent in visualizing written narrative.

In Nonnus' work more so than in Ovid's, Actaeon's metamorphosis and hybridity are prominent in the narrative from the very beginning. Pan is described as often gazing at the skillful young hunter outrunning the swift stag (*Dion.* 5.206–300), the very animal Actaeon is fated to become, the animal unable to escape his maddened dogs. The external audience, the reader, recognizes such phrasing as meaningful and as foreshadowing the myth's conclusion. As readers, we are privileged in our position of foreknowledge, but also, in our position as external viewers, we are guided through the metamorphosis by the narrator's words. Though we know Actaeon to be a man and visualize him as such, we are also able to recognize the stag as Actaeon and to understand the stag's speech as human (*Dion.* 5.337–365). In this privilege we differ from the internal audience, the dogs that see and hear only the stag (*Dion.* 5.364–369) and the parents who search for their son's human remains in vain (*Dion.* 5.388–394).[26] Once we acknowledge our privileged position as readers, we can begin to see similarities in the narrative strategies involved in depictions of metamorphoses in literary and visual treatments. Of particular importance in this context are depictions in classical art of Actaeon's *sparagmos*, which often coincides visually with his transformation. In these and other ancient images, Actaeon is never shown fully transformed; instead, he retains human features—most importantly his human face—onto which, if at all, aspects of

25 Autonoë's inability to recognize her son's body is a particularly powerful reminder of the limitations of human vision (Nonn. *Dion.* 5.390–394). Cf. Eur. *Ba.* 480, 501–502, 918–922, and 1165–1284.

26 Cf. Ovid *Met.* 3.229–231.

the stag are transposed.[27] Viewers of such images are able to recognize the central figure of Actaeon as human regardless of any signs of hybridity. The internal audience, however, must be understood as unable to recognize the human in Actaeon, as viewing a different image, so to speak; they see what is only hinted at for the external audience: the fully transformed stag.[28] The external viewer, much like the reader in Nonnus or Ovid, is provided with clues that enable them to decode the complex narrative; without the aid of a hybrid or human figure in the visual depiction, or without narrative exposition, the external audience, too, would only be able to see a stag torn apart by hunting dogs.

In his request for a commemorative image, Actaeon shows concern for the viewer's ability to engage with the image emotionally, showing an awareness of visual conventions (*Dion.* 5.527–532):

> Ζῳοτύπον δ' ἱκέτευε πολύτροπον, ὄφρα χαράξῃ
> στικτὸν ἐμὸν νόθον εἶδος ἀπ' αὐχένος εἰς πόδας ἄκρους·
> μοῦνον ἐμοῦ βροτέοιο τύπον τεύξειε προσώπου,
> πάντες ἵνα γνώωσιν ἐμὴν ψευδήμονα μορφήν.
> Μηδέ, πάτερ, γράψειας ἐμὸν μόρον· οὐ δύναται γὰρ
> δακρυχέειν ἐμὸν εἶδος ὁμοῦ καὶ πότμον ὁδίτης.

> And ask a skillful artist to carve my changeling dappled shape from neck to feet, but let him make only my face of human form, that all may recognize my shape as false. But do not inscribe (or depict) my fate, father; for the wayfarer cannot shed a tear for fate and shape together.

Actaeon is concerned that passersby should recognize his shape as false, even as he does his best to make his father recognize his human form in his animal shape (*Dion.* 5.415–426). In his transformed state, though, it is only through his speech that Actaeon is able to persuade his father to recognize him, and it is through his face in the image that he hopes to achieve the recognition of the passerby. As the narrator of his own fate, Actaeon draws on familiar literary tropes to describe his metamorphosis, highlighting the humanity hidden beneath his animal skin (*Dion.* 5.421–428). His initial focus on his voice (*Dion.* 5.419–420) is mirrored in his concern for the depiction of his human face in the image. Here, too, he follows well-established narrative and visual conventions.

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27 See below, pp. 169–171.

28 The external viewer here enjoys similar privileges to the divine figures within the images. Artemis and, in some cases, Lyssa look at the scene fully comprehending its meaning and in control of the action. Cf. Verhelst 2017, 221–273.

In some respects, however, Actaeon's request deviates from familiar visual traditions and does so in striking ways.[29] He does not wish to have his fate inscribed or depicted on his grave stele,[30] but rather considers the depiction of his hybrid shape itself to be sufficient reason for the passerby to shed a tear. Visual representations of Actaeon's metamorphosis and of his being torn apart by his dogs from Classical and Late Antiquity seldom feature any form of writing, and though we do find a few examples of labels in vase painting,[31] such images do not offer the viewer any further textual guidance. Moreover, especially in the earliest representations, Actaeon is portrayed as fully human, his form untouched by the transformation.[32] Instead, the arrangement of the protagonists is considered sufficient: Artemis directs or watches the dogs that attack Actaeon, who is unable to defend himself, even when he is holding weapons.[33] In later depictions of the scene, the hybrid shape becomes an essential part, be it in the form of a deer hide draped around Actaeon's body as in a number of early fifth-century vase paintings,[34] or in the form of antlers sprouting from Actaeon's forehead as in many Campanian wall paintings.[35] Interestingly, the sprouting antlers tend to feature also in depictions of Actaeon's crime, the watching of Artemis' bath specifically, foreshadowing the metamorphosis and the *sparagmos*.[36] What all of these images have in common is their narrative depiction of Actaeon's fate; they all position Actaeon, transformed or not, in a narrative context that allows the viewer to recognize and retell the myth. The antlers or deer hide, just like the dogs or Artemis, provide visual clues for the viewer to engage with the figure of Actaeon on a narrative level and to follow the myth along the visual paths provided by the image.[37] The portrait that Nonnus' Actaeon envisions, however, does not provide any such crucial narrative clues.

The recognition of such narrative potential within the image itself and of the viewer's role in the creation of meaning lies at the core of many art-historical studies of narrative art from antiquity through modernity. Taking a sixteenth-century painting of Actaeon's myth, Titian's famous *Diana and Actaeon*, as an

29 For a detailed study of visual representations of Actaeon's death, see Schlam 1984, 87–105; cf. Leach 1981.

30 Cf. Paschalis 2014, 115–118. See Squire 2009, 147 and 347–348 on γράφειν.

31 E.g., *LIMC* s.v. Aktaion 11 and 27.

32 *LIMC* s.v. Aktaion 1–25.

33 E.g., *LIMC* s.v. Aktaion 6, 11, and 16.

34 E.g., *LIMC* s.v. Aktaion 26–30; cf. 31–33. Cf. Paschalis 2014, 109–115.

35 Cf. Ovid *Met.* 3.139–140.

36 Cf. Apul. *Met.* 2.4.

37 Cf. Baumann 2011, 37–90.

example, Paul Barolsky highlights some of the difficulties inherent in the language with which we approach narrative images and in the textual emphasis we place on a medium explicitly non-textual in nature.[38] A picture cannot *per se* perform the task of telling a story, just as the viewer cannot actually read an image; rather, paintings such as Titian's depict a moment, frozen and without narrative force of their own. It is through visual clues, such as attributes or the arrangement of figures, that images allow their viewers to reconstruct the narrative depicted and to engage with it beyond the purely aesthetic.[39] The image, however, relies on the viewer's familiarity with the literary or oral tradition of the depicted narrative;[40] especially when no labels are provided, the image must provide sufficient visual clues for the viewer to be able to create meaning.

Nonnus' Actaeon, however, does not request a narrative work of art like Titian's. Instead, he wishes for his transformed figure to be shown alone without further narrative support. In so doing, Actaeon appears to distinguish between his shape as single portrait and his fate as narrative image. The reader, however, is left to wonder whether the hybrid shape alone is enough to guide a viewer, to allow them to reconstruct the myth's narrative from the image. It is, after all, only after Actaeon relates his fate to him that his father is able to recognize his son behind the unfamiliar features. Here, as in other episodes, Nonnus is playing with his characters' lack of familiarity with their own, ancient narrative; the figures are presented as truly experiencing their fates for the first time, unaware of their literary history and tradition.[41] And yet Actaeon expects a passerby to be able to understand the image of the transformed stag and to create meaning from so little visual detail. His claim that a viewer could not mourn shape and fate together appears to indicate that he expects the image's audience to be unfamiliar with his literary narrative and therefore unable to engage with the image beyond recognizing the unusual shape. His human face is here presented as a sufficient narrative clue for viewers to be able to recognize for themselves the fact of the metamorphosis, though not necessarily the story of its circumstances or conclusion.

In classical and Late Antique images, Actaeon's metamorphosis is never shown as complete or even near complete, offering no visual precedent for Nonnus' grave stele;[42] rather, the transformation, as discussed above, is always

38 Barolsky 2014, 23–43; cf. Squire 2009, 306–356.

39 Cf., e.g., Hodge and Kress 1988, 37–78, esp. 52–63; Bal and Bryson 1991.

40 Cf. Panofsky 1939, 3–31.

41 Cf. Verhelst 2017, 236–242 on the Europa episode.

42 Chuvin 1976, 191; Paschalis 2014, 111.

only hinted at. The viewer, after all, is expected to understand the scene as depicting the death of a human being caught in a deceptive shape.[43] Similarly, Nonnus' reader is given access to Actaeon's innermost thoughts in order to underscore the unaltered humanity beneath his new skin. In the image presented by Nonnus' Actaeon, the unchanged face takes the place of the unaltered voice heard by the reader; the human face is the direct visual translation of the literary concern for the human speech. Neither is recognizable to the internal audience, but both are signposts to the external audience that the transformation is only physical, not emotional or intellectual. Partially transformed or only antlered, Actaeon's face is essential to conveying his humanity in ancient art, but nowhere more expressly than in Nonnus' imaginary picture.[44] That such explicitly animal depictions of Actaeon are not found before Nonnus may perhaps be seen as owing to the fact that hybrid figures with human faces and animal lower bodies are typically associated with bestial, albeit part-human, creatures, such as centaurs, figures far removed from the world of civilized humanity. Another hybrid figure, the Minotaur, is marked as even more bestial through his bull's head and his inability to engage with human society through speech or other expressions of thought or emotion.[45] In the context of these parallels, Actaeon's choices are imbued further with meaning: he represents himself as outcast from the human world, yet also estranged from the animal kingdom.

In this one image, Nonnus thus brings together two elements: the literary concern for human speech as a defining aspect of Actaeon's humanity, and the visual concern for the rendering of the head as human. The image at once shows an awareness of artistic conventions and is yet deeply rooted in literary imagery. The only images depicting Actaeon in the described fashion come from two illustrated copies of Pseudo-Nonnus' commentary on the *Homilies* of Gregory of Nazianzus,[46] the Jerusalem codex dating to the eleventh and the Vatican codex to the eleventh or twelfth century.[47] Both illustrations engage with the above considerations about the depiction of humanity in an animal body, though differing in their specific visual choices. Where the Jerusalem codex portrays only the face and neck as human, the Vatican codex shows the entire

43 Compare the use of the mask of Pentheus in the final presentation of his torn body in the *Bacchae*, where the audience witnesses Agave's recognition (1165–284).

44 Only a few ancient images depicting Actaeon with a fully animal head are known (*LIMC* s.v. Aktaion, numbers 76–80); cf. Niccolini and Niccolini 1890, pl. 13; Weitzmann 1951, 15.

45 See note 42, p. 170.

46 The commentary itself dates to the sixth century.

47 Jerusalem Cod. Taphou 14, fol. 308^{r} (Weitzmann 1951, pl. III, fig. 6); Vat.gr.1947, fol. 143^{v} (Weitzmann 1951, pl. IV, fig. 10).

upper body as human, evoking depictions of centaurs. Correctly noting the absence of classical models, Kurt Weitzmann argues that these images should be seen as deriving from a Byzantine interest in keeping closer to the text.[48] Though I agree with Weitzmann that these images receive strong impulses from text, I would argue that, while this type of visualizing literary narrative may indeed reflect the interests of Byzantine artists, Nonnus' text provides evidence that Late Antique writers had already begun creating such literary images. The artistic realization of the hybrid Actaeon in the form of actual illustrations may in turn serve to underscore the argument for Nonnus' close engagement with the visual arts and his interest in painting a picture that, while literary to the core, could be seen as artistically achievable and meaningful.

3 Contextualizing Actaeon's Visual Hybridity

The image of the hybrid figure of Actaeon on his grave stele thus presents a highly visual treatment of the narrative while simultaneously offering a distinctly literary take on the visual tradition. Though the image presents the most explicitly visual moment in Nonnus' retelling of the myth, the preceding narrative already prepares a highly visual reading, offering the image as a visual climax rather than as a first visual intrusion.

As discussed above, Actaeon's double role as hunter and hunted, as viewer and viewed, is established early in the episode. Through his eager gazing at Artemis, he treats the goddess as he treats his animal prey: entirely subject to his gaze and desires. Moreover, the emphasis on Actaeon's desire to catch a glimpse of Artemis' naked skin serves to underscore his guilt and the importance of the gaze in Actaeon's own perception of the crime. In Aristaios' dream, Actaeon is afforded an opportunity to recount his own version of the events and to exonerate himself. Instead, he illustrates his guilt in explicitly visual terms, describing the sweaty body of Artemis, her gleaming white limbs, and her general radiance, again directing the reader's gaze through his own; the Ovidian "striptease" is described not by the narrator,[49] but by Actaeon himself. Here, Nonnus can be seen to engage in an intricate intertextual exchange with the *Metamorphoses*, as his Actaeon commits the one crime Ovid's is unable to commit: Ovid's Actaeon is silenced by the loss of his speech, by Diana's revenge (*Met.* 3.192–193).[50] Nonnus' Actaeon, on the other hand, is able, in his father's

48 Weitzmann 1951, 15–17.
49 See Liveley 2010, 46.
50 See Verhelst 2018, 779–782.

dream, to tell of the forbidden sight and, in so doing, he adds to the visual crime a verbal one. Actaeon's guilt, denied in Ovid, is thus intensified in Nonnus.

Actaeon's punishment, too, is amplified in the *Dionysiaca*: though the transformation itself is initially afforded only a few lines, Actaeon's suffering is prolonged and his *sparagmos* turned into a spectacle. The reader is again forced to linger on the image, this time at Artemis' behest. Unlike Ovid's Diana, however, Nonnus' Artemis does not reveal her motivation, and is not even explicitly the cause of Actaeon's transformation; she is nonetheless the driving force behind his suffering and, ultimately, his death. Actaeon's lament, his response to the transformation and to the inevitability of his fate, is markedly different from the short Ovidian appeal to his dogs (*Met.* 3.230). Where Ovid presents this appeal as internal to Actaeon—it is his wish to call to his dogs, but he, a stag, has no words at his command—Nonnus allows the reader to hear Actaeon's long speech as though still human. The speech itself also differs from Ovid's in that Nonnus' Actaeon appears accepting of his fate. In a "plaintive voice," he compares his fate to Teiresias' relatively good fortune (*Dion.* 5.337–345),[51] before contemplating the emotional and intellectual capacity of animals (*Dion.* 5.348–351):

> Σφωιτέρῳ πότε θῆρες ἐπιστενάχουσιν ὀλέθρῳ;
> Ἀφραδέες ζώουσι καὶ οὐ νοέουσι τελευτήν.
> Μοῦνος ἐγὼ μεθέπω πινυτὸν νόον· ὀλλύμενος δὲ
> ὄμμασι θηρείοισιν ἐχέφρονα δάκρυα λείβω.

> Do beasts ever lament their own death? They live without thought, and know not their end. I alone keep a sensible mind perishing: I drop intelligent tears from the eyes of a beast!

Actaeon asks ontological questions that have suddenly become meaningful to him as he tries to come to terms with his human mind inside his animal body. The preoccupation of the Ovidian narrator with this aspect of the transformation is here entirely Actaeon's own. Throughout this passage, Actaeon focuses on his most human characteristics, his thoughts, lament, and tears,[52] all of which are linked to his mind. Literary emphasis on these aspects anticipates their visual translation in Actaeon's image, discussed above. Actaeon is trapped

51 Cf. Callimachus, *On the Bath of Pallas* 95–130.

52 Ovid adds the human gesture of supplication (*Met.* 3.239–241).

in a bestial shape, but his mind, feelings, and language, his invisible aspect, so to speak, are still human.[53] His transformation thus creates an ultimately impossible hybrid.

The lament ends on a self-conscious note, as Actaeon reflects on his dogs' response to his altered form, their inability to recognize his shape or voice (*Dion.* 5.364–365).[54] Without warning, Actaeon has moved even further away from the human world: he has lost his voice mid-speech, impossible for the reader to realize until told.[55] And so the closing lines further reinforce that picture of impossible hybridity, marking every external aspect as distinctly nonhuman and visually unrecognizable (*Dion.* 5.366–369):

> Ἡμιθανὴς τάδ᾽ ἔλεξε, καὶ οὐκ ἀίοντα λιτάων
> θηρείῃ κύνα μάργον ἐλίσσετο πενθάδι φωνῇ·
> μύθους μὲν προέηκεν ἐχέφρονας, ἀντὶ δὲ φωνῆς
> ἀνδρομέης κελάδησεν ἀσημάντου θρόος ἠχοῦς.

> Half dead he spoke, and as he prayed, the cruel hound did not understand the prayers poured out in sorrow with the voice of a beast; the stories he told had meaning, but instead of a human voice, only a noise of unmeaning sound rang out.

It is a hybridity that is not comparable to the Minotaur's or the centaurs' physically, but rather one that opposes mind and body. Actaeon's words are meaningful, but his speech is meaningless and incomprehensible to the human mind. It is the kind of hybridity that makes recognition impossible, as Actaeon's parents' behavior shows. Autonoë learns about Actaeon's death through Rumor, but is not told of the metamorphosis, leaving her unable to recognize her son's corpse. It is only through his ability to speak with a human voice in Aristaios' dream that Actaeon is able to regain some of his human capacity. By contrasting the reader's ability to follow Actaeon's transformation and later lament with the inability of the internal audience to do the same unless explicitly told, Nonnus underscores the reader's privileged view of the narrative. In so doing, Nonnus may again be argued to look to artistic conventions: viewers do not engage with the emotional and intellectual capacities of the depicted figures until they have decoded the image sufficiently to be able to recall the narrative and to identify each figure's role.

53 Cf. Nonn. *Dion.* 5.346.
54 Cf. Barkan 1980, 322–323.
55 See Verhelst 2018, 777–778.

The internal audience's inability to see and understand is emphasized throughout the Nonnian passage. The human onlookers are just as much deceived by the stag as the dogs were earlier on; they are blinded by their expectation of Actaeon's human form. Nonnus repeatedly emphasizes that Autonoë is not to blame for her blindness, just as Actaeon had earlier understood that his dogs were simply unable to see the truth. The prominence of this motif of failed recognition draws the readers' attention to their own privileged position: line by line they are guided through the struggle of the internal audience to reconcile what they see with what they know.

It is therefore only in a dream that this final recognition can transpire, a state in which the human mind is unconstrained by the usual limits of its imagination. Again, Nonnus first introduces Actaeon's ghost as a deer with human tears trying to communicate human feelings through external signs. When Actaeon finally begins to speak, he identifies himself first and foremost by means of his human voice. Only then does he use his speech to convey the changed nature of his form, bridging the gap between what is seen and what ought to be. It is only once he can make this hybridity known, through language, that his tale can be known and told. To some extent, this scene is, then, not so much about Actaeon's telling Artemis' secret story, as it is about Actaeon telling Actaeon's secret story—a story he is here telling for the very first time himself. In this way, Nonnus' Actaeon sets literary parameters as much as he sets visual ones. He creates his own figure in two different media, and it is a figure torn between two identities, unable to embrace either fully. Actaeon is a hybrid figure, visually impossible and literarily intriguing.

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CHAPTER 8

Structure and Meaning through Analogy: Remarks on the Use of Spatial Form in the *Dionysiaca*

Camille Geisz

One of the ways to account for the repetition of scenes and motifs of the *Dionysiaca* is to consider its structure according to the concept of spatial form. This concept was developed by J. Frank in 1945 in reference to modern poetry.[1] Frank remarks that meaning is achieved through the perception of the whole poem, rather than chronologically as the reader progresses through the poem. The idea has been applied to medieval romance by N. Lacy and some aspects of the seemingly disjointed structure of the *Dionysiaca* lend themselves to a similar analysis. Nonnus' epic is partly structured by the interplay of analogies and correspondences rather than by a definite timeline, and a thematic structure is often preferred to the more common, chronological one. Lacy writes:

> The term "spatial form" identifies a disjunctive technique of composing in which sequential relations are de-emphasized, leaving the reader to connect nonconsecutive parts of a work by fitting together its related fragments.[2]

There are several instances of such "related fragments" in Nonnus' poem. In this chapter, I would like to focus on two of them—the motif of bathing scenes and the story of Philomela and Procne—to illustrate how, throughout Nonnus' work, repetition should not be seen as gratuitous; indeed, it contains variety and highlights similarities as well as contrasts between separate episodes in the poem.

1 Frank 1945.
2 Lacy 1974, 160. Vincent Giraudet analyzed the use of spatial form in the *Dionysiaca* in his as yet unpublished thesis (2010).

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1 Bathing Scenes

The variety of the bathing scenes in the *Dionysiaca* provides a significant insight into the writing methods of Nonnus. Close scrutiny of these scenes reveals the narrator's concern about the structure of his poem, as well as his skill in proposing, through the repetition of the same theme, a colorful range of variations, reworked through both his literary background and his sense of humor.

The first of the eight bathing scenes in the *Dionysiaca* is the archetypal one included in the story of Artemis and Actaeon, located outside the chronological order of the narrative to be used as a model or a foil for the other seven scenes. The Nonnian rendering of this well-known story has Callimachean undertones, and consists of two parts that complement each other. In the subsequent bathing scenes, the narrator displays his skill by creating variety in elements such as the behavior of Zeus or the setting of the bathing scene. He also adds bathing scenes to myths that do not include them in other versions known to us. His wit and sense of humor are displayed in the story of Morrheus and Chalcomede, a parody of the archetypal bathing scene, with inverted motifs and Homeric elements pervading the description of Morrheus' bathing preparations, which turn epic into mock epic.[3]

The following eight bathing scenes are found in the *Dionysiaca*:

(1) Artemis and Actaeon: 5.301–315 and 475–492 (the ghost of Actaeon tells his story to Aristaios)
(2) Persephone and Zeus: 5.586–621
(3) Semele and Zeus: 7.215–279
(4) Nicaia and Hymnos: 15.212–254
(5) Nicaia and Dionysus: 16.1–19
(6) Morrheus and Chalcomede: 35.155–160 and 185–203
(7) Clymene and Helios: 38.108–129
(8) Artemis and Aura: 48.302–308 and 328–350.

Scenes 1, 2, 3, and 7 are proper bathing scenes: a female character taking a bath is seen by a man or a god who has come across her by chance, or has followed her on purpose. The consequences of the encounter vary from one story to another, from the birth of a child to the death of the onlooker.[4] In scenes 4

3 Swimming scenes such as the race between Calamos and Carpos in book 11 are not included in this study as they do not fall under the category of the Artemis and Actaeon archetypal bathing scene.

4 Hadjittofi writes in her discussion of the Actaeon episode: "Interestingly, most other voyeurs of bathing maidens are gods, and not only do they go unpunished, they also end up having sex with the girls they spied upon" (2016, 148).

and 5 (Nicaia-Hymnos and Nicaia-Dionysus) the bathing scene is reduced to a minimum; it is only mentioned within a list of locations where Hymnos and Dionysus are able to look at Nicaia. In scene 8, the onlooker is not a man but a woman, Aura. And in scene 6, the roles are inverted, since a man is bathing while a woman is watching.

2 Artemis and Actaeon: An Archetypal Bathing Scene

The first bathing scene in the *Dionysiaca*, in book 5, is rather short; it merely contains, without much detail, some key themes and elements, most of which will recur in subsequent bathing scenes: the location of the onlooker (*Dion.* 5.303), the vision, including a description of the onlooker's gaze and of the body of the woman (5.304–306); the detection of the spy (5.309–311); and the reaction of the victim, hiding or covering her body (5.312–315).

Such brevity is unusual for the Nonnian narrator; indeed, he soon provides a second, longer version of this story, as the ghost of Actaeon appears to his father Aristaios to tell him the story of his death. This is an occasion for the poet to tell the story for the second time, from a different point of view, that of the victim, Actaeon himself. This scene describes the location of the onlooker (5.474–481), the arrival of the woman and her desire to bathe because of the heat of the day (5.482–484), the description of the gaze and of the body (5.485–488), and the detection of the spy (5.489–491).

By reduplicating the scene, the narrator chooses to tell the story in two parts, so that it is left to the reader to recreate the whole scene from the two versions. The second version has more details concerning the beauty of Artemis, which is in keeping with the fact that Actaeon himself is speaking; whereas the first version dwells longer on the way Artemis hides herself again after the alarm is raised. Of course, Actaeon could not have seen this, since, according to his own report, he was falling from the tree and had already started to transform into a deer. Thus, the two versions, stemming from two different points of view, complement each other.[5]

5 Lasek discusses the use of bathing scenes "as a literary device used by the poet to create an erotic tension" (2015, 80) and remarks that neither version of the Actaeon episode contain a very precise description of Artemis. Actaeon only mentions the "snow-white rays of her radiance" αἴγλῃ χιονέας ἀκτῖνας ἀκοντίζουσα (5.485–486). Lasek adds: "the recipient's imagination as well as his/her curiosity will be satisfied to some extent, but not until the last book of the poem" (2015, 81), in which Aura compares her own body to Artemis', with emphasis on the breasts.

One of the major differences between the two scenes is the transformation of the "tall oak tree" of the first account (5.303 τανυπρέμνοιο φηγοῦ) into an olive grove in the second one (5.474 θάμνος ἔην τανύφυλλος, ὁ μὲν φυλίης, ὁ δ' ἐλαίης, "a dense bush of both wild and cultivated olive trees"). Actaeon adds that by climbing up the tree, he must have aroused the wrath of both Athena and Artemis (5.478–481):

ἀασάμην· διδύμην γὰρ ἀτάσθαλον ὕβριν ἀέξων
Παλλάδος εἰς φυτὸν ἦλθον, ἰδεῖν δέμας ἰοχεαίρης
τολμηροῖς βλεφάροισιν, ὅθεν βαρύμηνις ἀπειλὴ
ἔχραεν Ἀκταίωνι καὶ Ἀρτέμιδος καὶ Ἀθήνης.

> I lost my mind. I committed a double, imprudent crime: I climbed up Pallas' tree, to look at the body of the Archeress with my daring eyes. And thus did the threatening anger of both Artemis and Athenas fall upon Actaeon.[6]

It seems that in the speeches of Actaeon, Nonnus establishes a series of links to Callimachus' fifth hymn, *The Bath of Pallas*. As he is torn apart by his dogs, Actaeon addresses Teiresias, who was lucky enough to see Athena bathing without having to die for it (*Dion.* 5.337–339):

Ὄλβιε Τειρεσία, σὺ γὰρ ἔδρακες ἐκτὸς ὀλέθρου
γυμνὸν ἀναινομένης οἰκτίρμονος εἶδος Ἀθήνης·
οὐ θάνες, οὐκ ἐλάφοιο δέμας λάχες

> Happy Tiresias! You avoided death, even though you looked at the naked body of Athena against her will—but she took pity on you. You did not die, nor were you changed into a stag …

This is a possible echo of Athena's words in Callimachus' hymn, in which she comforts Chariclo, Tiresias' mother, by telling her that she is lucky that her son was not punished with death, as Actaeon will be (*Hymn. lav. Pall.* 107–109):

πόσσα μὲν ἁ Καδμηὶς ἐς ὕστερον ἔμπυρα καυσεῖ,
τόσσα δ' Ἀρισταῖος, τὸν μόνον εὐχόμενοι
παῖδα, τὸν ἁβατὰν Ἀκταίονα, τυφλὸν ἰδέσθαι.

6 The texts of ancient works quoted in this chapter are taken from the Belles Lettres volumes. The translations are mine.

> The daughter of Cadmos will later burn so many offerings, as will Aristaios; both praying that they might see their only son, chaste Actaeon, blind.

The mention of the olive tree in Nonnus reinforces the parallel with Callimachus, since Athena does not usually appear in other versions of the Actaeon myth. Actaeon also relates how everything went dark around him as he fell from the tree (*Dion.* 5.492 καὶ ζόφος ἠερόφοιτος ἐμὰς ἐκάλυψεν ὀπωπάς, "darkness filled the air and covered my eyes"), just as Teiresias became blind after having been discovered by Athena (*Hymn. lav. Pall.* 82 ἁ μὲν ἔφα, παιδὸς δ' ὄμματα νὺξ ἔλαβεν, "she spoke, and night filled the young man's eyes").

Like Ovid in the *Metamorphoses* (3.169–172), Nonnus mentions in Actaeon's version of the story the names of the nymphs who were with Artemis (*Dion.* 5.489–491: Loxo, Oupis, Hekaerge), although these names are different from Ovid's. They prefigure the last bathing scene, in which Artemis is also involved, and where the three nymphs are presented as the daughters of Oceanos (48.332–334).

The moon is another recurring element in bathing scenes. In lines 5.487–488 Actaeon compares the radiance of Artemis to the reflection of the moon in the ocean:

> φαίης δ', ὡς παρὰ χεῦμα παλίμπορον Ὠκεανοῖο
> ἑσπερίη σελάγιζε δι' ὕδατος ὄμπνια Μήνη.

> You might say that, by the ebbing and rising flow of Oceanos, the full moon of evening was gleaming through the water.

The Semele scene in book 7 also contains an allusion to the moon. Although Zeus is the main onlooker and admirer of Semele's beauty, a Naiad is also present in the scene, and offers in her speech a range of hypotheses concerning Semele's identity. One of them assimilates Semele to Selene, because of her "heavenly, snow-white beauty" (αἰθερίην … χιονώδεα μορφήν, *Dion.* 7.243).[7]

In a simile in book 38, Clymene is compared to the full evening moon, reflected in water; line 38.124 repeats Actaeon's words at 5.488 (*Dion.* 38.122–124):

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7 Berenice Verhelst discusses the Naiad's speech in her analysis of ekphrastic ethopoeae and of the "broader issue of how beautiful people are visualized in the *Dionysiaca*" (2016, 235, 244–248).

ἔην δέ τις, ὡς ὅτε δισσῆς
μαρμαρυγὴν τροχόεσσαν ἀναπλήσασα κεραίης
ἑσπερίη σελάγιζε δι᾽ ὕδατος ὄμπνια Μήνη.

> She was like the moon when she has filled the bright orb of her two horns—the full moon of evening gleaming through the water.

Finally, in book 48, in the bathing scene involving Artemis and Aura, Artemis is compared to the rising moon in the most elaborate version of this simile (*Dion.* 48.320–324):

ὡς ὅτε δίφρῳ
αἰθερίῳ πέμπουσα φιλαγρύπνων φλόγα πυρσῶν
ἀννεφέλους ἀκτῖνας ὀιστεύουσα Σελήνη
πλησιφαὴς ἀνέτελλε πυριτρεφέων μέσον ἄστρων,
οὐρανίην στίχα πᾶσαν ἀμαλδύνουσα προσώπῳ·

> Just as when, in her heavenly chariot, bright with the flame of her wakeful fires, Semele shoots her unclouded rays, and rises in full light in the midst of the fiery stars, and her looks make the whole host in the sky dim …

This series of bathing scenes is an example of the narrator's use of spatial form. He imitates himself and creates very similar passages as far as the choice of words is concerned; yet, when the scenes are read side by side, the variations become conspicuous. In a Callimachean fashion, he engages in a game of literary allusions—here to a Callimachean poem.

The concept of spatial form also suggests that events that have only limited impact on the unfolding of the main narrative as a whole acquire a new importance in the poem, the structure of which is partly based on these echoes and parallels, "without regard to chronology, through such devices as image patterns, leitmotifs, analogy, and contrast."[8]

Thus, as far as these bathing scenes are concerned, Vian's remark about Nonnus' "cosmic preludes" seems to be applicable:

> Comme d'autres poètes (Quintus de Smyrne), Nonnos pratique la *mimesis* surtout dans la première présentation qu'il fait d'un thème: il s'inspire

8 Smitten and Daghistany 1981, 7.

> ouvertement d'Homère et d'Hésiode au chant 6; il fait preuve ensuite d'une plus grande originalité.[9]

Indeed, the pair of bathing scenes included in the story of Actaeon presents few unexpected features and is reminiscent of Callimachus and Ovid;[10] but the narrator then uses this archetypal bathing scene as a model to build other bathing scenes for characters whose myths, to our knowledge, do not usually include bathing scenes. What is more, these subsequent bathing scenes entail greater sophistication and originality from the narrator.

The position of the Actaeon episode in book 5, at the beginning of the poem and before the birth of Dionysus, supports the idea that this bathing scene serves as a template for the following bathing scenes; it is taken out of the chronological sequence of events—it should happen much later, since Actaeon's death occurs when he was "still breathing battle after the Indian war," Ἰνδῴην μετὰ δῆριν ἔτι πνείοντα κυδοιμοῦ (*Dion.* 5.302). This suggests that the narrator is indeed more concerned with the creation of echoes and parallels between scenes rather than with respecting the chronological sequence of events.

3 Variations

3.1 *Zeus' Gaze*

The interplay of similarities and differences between the scenes emphasizes various aspects of the setting or characters. For example, in the Semele episode, Zeus modestly does not gaze upon ὄργια κόλπου "the secrets of the lap" of the girl (*Dion.* 7.266), whereas the other onlookers, or he himself when other girls were concerned, do not show so much restraint. Pierre Chuvin writes in a note to this line: "Il s'agit certainement d'une marque de respect, au moins littéraire, envers la mère de Dionysos."[11] Through the variation of this detail, Semele is set apart from the other women of the *Dionysiaca*; as the mother of the main character, she is shown particular respect.

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9 Vian 1993, 45 n. 28.

10 Nonnus seems to have ignored two versions of this myth: according to Apollodorus (*Bibl.* 3.4.4), Actaeon was punished by Zeus because he had dared to woo Semele. In Pausanias (*Descr. Gr.* 9.2.3), Actaeon is also punished by Zeus, this time in order to prevent him from wooing Semele. Pausanias refers for this version to a now lost poem by Stesichorus.

11 Vian 1999, 96 n. 2.

3.2 *Cosmic Setting*

The Clymene and Helios scene in book 38 has a variation on the setting. Whereas the other scenes take place on the banks of rivers or brooks,[12] this scene takes place in the ocean. This scene sets the tone for the rest of the book, in which the narrator tells the story of Clymene and Helios' son Phaethon and includes long passages describing the sky and the position of the stars.[13] The cosmic setting of this bathing scene shows how the main pattern can be adapted to fit different contexts and situations.

3.3 *Morrheus and Chalcomede: A Parody*

The Morrheus and Chalcomede scene in book 35 inverts the motifs and elements typical of traditional bathing scenes. The genders of the protagonists are inverted: the man is bathing while the woman watches. Moreover, Morrheus is fully aware of Chalcomede's presence, whereas in the other scenes the onlooker is hiding, so that the person who bathes has no knowledge of the onlooker's presence. She has to distract him in order to give a chance to Dionysus' army, as Thetis explained to her earlier (*Dion.* 33.361–366): not only does he know that she is watching him, but he is even bathing because she asked him to (*Dion.* 35.118–119). Finally, Chalcomede does not take any pleasure in watching Morrheus bathing. While the men in other bathing scenes could not have enough of looking at the bathing women, Chalcomede turns away from the sight of the naked man (*Dion.* 35.200–202):

> μεταστρεφθεῖσα δὲ κούρη
> Μορρέος ἀχλαίνοιο σαόφρονας εἷλκεν ὀπωπάς,
> ἀσκεπὲς αἰδομένη δέμας ἀνέρος
>
> The girl turned away, averting her modest gaze from Morrheus undressed, bashful at the sight of a man's naked body.

The adjective σαόφρων is used by the narrator in other bathing scenes, twice in relation to Artemis, and once to Persephone.[14] Here the woman is still the

12 Cf. Persephone at *Dion.* 5.607 πηγαίῳ ῥεέθρῳ ("a spring's flow"); Semele at 7.215 ὄχθης ("a riverbank"); Nicaia at 15.249 χεύματι πηγῆς ("the stream of a spring"); Nicaia at 16.8 and Artemis at 48.305 ὀρεσσιχύτοισι λοετροῖς ("a mountain pool").

13 Helios explains to Phaethon where to drive the chariot among the constellations in *Dion.* 38.222–290; Phaethon's journey and the ensuing disorder caused in the sky is described in *Dion.* 38.333–423.

14 Cf. Artemis in *Dion.* 5.313 σαόφρονας μαζούς ("modest breasts") and 48.644 σαόφρονος ἀνάσσης ("the modest queen"); Persephone in *Dion.* 5.605 σαόφρονα μίτρην ("her chaste belt").

modest one, but instead of fearing to be seen naked, she fears to see the naked man. Voyeurism is turned into exhibitionism.

At the beginning of the scene, the narrator also plays with the Homeric scene of the arming of the warrior as Morrheus makes ready to bathe (*Dion.* 35.155–160). He rewrites it backwards: it is a scene of disarming and not of arming; therefore, the various parts of the armor are presented in reverse order, from head to chest, and not from chest to head.[15] Nonnus mentions first the crest (λόφος), then the shoulders (ὦμος), from which Morrheus unties his shield, and finally the breastplate (θώρηξ); this order is the reverse of the one chosen by Homer. This variation upon the Homeric motif increases the humorous tone of this scene; the epic motif is turned into mock epic. The arming scene becomes a disarming scene, for a warrior about to take a bath. Beyond the comical aspect, this disarming of Morrheus also hints at his coming demise. He is placing himself, willingly, in a position of vulnerability.

In the other bathing scenes, a recurrent theme was that of the color of the skin of the beautiful women. The most common colors are pink, white, snow-white, gleaming white/silvery.[16] The narrator takes up this theme again during Morrheus' bath, with witty inversions (*Dion.* 35.192–197):

λουσάμενος δ᾽ ἀνέβαινε μέλας πάλιν· εἶχε δὲ μορφήν,
ὡς φύσις ἐβλάστησε, καὶ ἀνέρος οὐ δέμας ἅλμη,
οὐ χροιὴν μετάμειψεν, ἐρευθαλέη περ ἐοῦσα.
καὶ κενεῇ χρόα λοῦσεν ἐπ᾽ ἐλπίδι· χιόνεος γὰρ
ἱμερόεις μενέαινε φανήμεναι ἄζυγι κούρῃ·
καὶ λινέῳ κόσμησε δέμας χιονώδεϊ πέπλῳ

He came out of his bath still black; he had the appearance nature had given him. The sea water did not change the man's body, nor its color,

15 Cf. Homeric scenes of the arming of a warrior: *Il.* 3.328–338 (Paris); 11.15–55 (Agamemnon); 16.130–154 (Patroclus); 19.364–424 (Achilles).

16 Pink: Semele (*Dion.* 7.257 ῥοδόχροα δάκτυλα, 7.259 ῥοδέου προσώπου), Nicaia (15.219 ῥοδοειδέα προσώπου, 15.225 σφυρὰ φοινίσσοντο). White: Semele (7.218 πάνλευκον δέμας), Nicaia (15.225 ἐλευκαίνοντο μηροῖς, 15.239 λευκὸν βραχίονα, 15.241, a comparison with Dawn's whiteness: εἰ τόσον, ὡς Νίκαια, πέλεν λευκώλενος Ἠώς). White as snow: Artemis (5.485–486 αἴγλη / χιονέας ἀκτῖνας ἀκοντίζουσα), Nicaia (15.213 χιονώδεα κούρῃν, 15.225 χ̣ι̣ο̣νέων μελέων), Beroe (42.88 χιονέῳ προσώπῳ). Gleaming white/silvery, often compared to the moon: Artemis and Clymene (5.488 and 38.124 ἑσπερίη σελάγιζε δι᾽ ὕδατος ὄμπνια Μήνη), Nicaia (15.232 λευκοφαὴς σελάγιζε γυμνούμενος αὐχήν, 15.243, a comparison with Selene's whiteness: εἰ πλέον ἀργυφέη πέλε παρθένος, ἠὲ Σελήνη, 16.17–18 στίλβοντα δοκεύων / αὐχένα γυμνωθέντα, σέλας πέμποντα̣ Σελήνης), Clymene (38.129–130 καταυγάζουσα δὲ λίμνην / ἀργυφέων εὔκυκλος ἴτυς φοινίσσετο μαζῶν).

> although it was red itself. For he had bathed with a vain hope: he wanted to appear white and desirable to the unmarried girl. And he covered his body with a white linen tunic.

Unlike the bathing women, Morrheus' skin is dark, μέλας, even after he has bathed and washed away the dirt and blood from the fight. Nonnus plays with the fact that he is bathing in the Red Sea (i.e., the Indian Ocean): when they bathe, women, who have pink and white and gleaming skin, transfer those colors to the water and make it shine white and pink too. Morrheus is hoping for the opposite phenomenon, that the Red Sea will change his skin from black to pink. He wishes to become snow-white, χιόνεος, like the bathing women and like Chalcomede herself, who is called λευκάδα νύμφην (*Dion.* 35.108). But all he can do is dress in white clothes, λινέῳ χιονώδεϊ πέπλῳ, in his best attempt to appear similar to the Bacchant.[17]

Bathing scenes are an example of the use of spatial form based on the repetition of the same theme or motif. Bathing scenes are a well-known motif for an audience who must have been familiar with the story of Artemis and Actaeon. The Nonnian narrator uses the knowledge of his audience to his advantage and offers a variety of bathing scenes in his epic poem. This allows him to create links or contrasts between characters, and to offer a novel rewriting of this type of scene in the comic Morrheus episode. Instead of chronology, similarities and the repetition of a theme provide another way to sustain the audience's attention and to structure the poem.

3.4 *Procne and Philomela*

Another example of the narrator's use of spatial form is his presentation of the story of Philomela and Procne.[18] This time the links between episodes are not provided by the repetition of the same scene; rather, the narrator creates links between parts of the main story by inserting fragments of the story of Philomela and Procne throughout his poem. The first substantial allusion to this story occurs as a digression in book 4, as the narrator recounts the wanderings of Cadmus (*Dion.* 4.319–321):

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17 Morrheus' failed attempt to transform his body by bathing is reminiscent of the Bethesda bathing scene in the *Paraphrase* (5.1–34), with an inversion: unlike Morrheus, the diseased man in the *Paraphrase* is miraculously cured by his bath.

18 For a more detailed analysis of the presentation of the story of Philomela and Procne in the *Dionysiaca*, see Geisz 2016, 177–178; 2018, 74–77.

Παρνησσοῦ δὲ κάρηνα λιπὼν μετανάστιος ἀνὴρ
Δαυλίδος ἔστιχεν οὖδας ὁμούριον, ἔνθεν ἀκούω
σιγαλέης λάλον εἷμα δυσηλακάτου Φιλομήλης

Then the wandering man left the heads of Parnassos and crossed the border to the land of Daulis, whence I hear comes the tell-tale garment of mute Philomela, the spinner of woe.

The digression in the next ten lines tells the story of Philomela. There are in total five allusions to this character in the *Dionysiaca*, none of which tells the full story, and some of them are very cryptic: clearly the narrator supposes his narratee to be familiar with the story. At the same time, the five allusions taken together complement each other so that the story can be gradually reconstructed. Elements of the story are presented in the following order:

(1) 2.131: Philomela was turned into a bird.
(2) 4.321–330: Philomela has a talking dress, λάλον εἷμα; she was raped by Tereus; her tongue was cut.
(3) 12.75–78: Philomela was turned into a bird; she was a keen weaver; she wove her secret on a robe.
(4) 44.265–269: Philomela helped Procne kill her son Itylos; Itylos was served as a meal for his father Tereus.
(5) 47.30–31: Birds remember the story of Philomela and Itylos.[19]

Thus the narrator engages and challenges the attentiveness of the narratee by breaking up the story into episodes that gradually appear in the course of the main storyline.[20]

19 This reconstruction leaves aside the fact that Philomela and Procne were sisters.

20 These five allusions are linked to the main storyline by various means. At *Dion.* 2.131 a Nymph, threatened by Typhon, wishes that she could become a bird like Philomela. At *Dion.* 4.319–321, the narrator links it to the mention of Daulis. *Dion.* 12.75–78 is a reported text, a "quotation" from one of Harmonia's prophetic tablets. The last two occurrences are justified by the mention of a knife at *Dion.* 44.267 (one of the Furies attacking the palace of Pentheus is holding the knife that Procne used to murder her son Itylos with the help of Philomela) and of a singing bird at *Dion.* 47.30 (as Dionysus enters Athens, a nightingale is singing, remembering Itylos and Philomela).

A similar technique appears in Apollonius' *Argonautica*, where the story of Ariadne is told in three different places: (1) 3.997–1003: Ariadne helped Theseus, left with him on his ship, her crown was turned into the constellation by the gods, who loved her; (2) 3.1096–101: Minos was well disposed toward Theseus for Ariadne's sake and let her go with him without holding a grudge; (3) 4.430–434: Theseus abandoned Ariadne on the island of Dia, and she became the lover of Dionysus.

The link with the main story of the *Dionysiaca* is made in book 48, where Aura is compared with Procne—she contemplates killing her child to punish its father, as Procne did (*Dion.* 48.745–748):

καὶ νοέειν μενέαινεν ἑὸν πόσιν, ὄφρα καὶ αὐτὴ
υἱέα δαιτρεύσειεν ἀναινομένῳ παρακοίτῃ,
αὐτὴ παιδοφόνος καὶ ὁμευνέτις, ὄφρά τις εἴπῃ·
'Πρόκνη παιδολέτειρα νέη πέλε δύσγαμος Αὔρη.'

> She wanted to know her husband, so that she might carve up her son to the one who entered her bed—without his knowing; she would be both child-killer and bedmate, so that men might say: "There is a new child-murdering Procne in Aura, the unlucky bride."

The vocabulary also plays a part in linking together these stories of murderous mothers.[21] At *Dion.* 44.267, Procne is described as θυμολέαινα ("with a lioness' heart"), while Agaue is assimilated to a "wild lioness" (ἀγροτέρη λέαινα) when she dismembers her son at *Dion.* 44.66. Aura, although not compared to a lioness herself, laid her children in the den of a lioness for her to eat them at *Dion.* 48.910. A further parallel can be drawn between Procne and Medea, who also killed her children as a means of taking revenge upon an unfaithful husband: the adjectives μιαιφόνος which describes the knife Procne used to kill Itylos at *Dion.* 44.266 and παιδολέτειρα which refers to Procne at *Dion.* 48.748 both appear in Euripides' play to describe Medea.[22]

This peculiar handling of the story of Philomela shows that the narrator does not expect his narratee to read or listen to the poem only once, but rather encourages him to flip through it, to go back and forth, draw parallels and put together the passages concerning the same characters that have been scattered through the main story. It also puts into sharp relief the importance of the thematic organization and connections in the *Dionysiaca*: if the digressions on Philomela and Procne might have seemed only loosely connected with the context in which they appeared, they are nonetheless, like the episode of Autonoë and Actaeon, closely related to the theme of the relationship between a mother and a son, here in its most violent variation, namely the killing of the son by

21 The relationship between a mother and a child is a central topic in the *Dionysiaca*, also developed for example in the side story of Autonoë and Actaeon in book 5.

22 Euripides, *Medea* 1346 and 850. The latter is also used in reference to Medea in the *Anthologia Graeca* 16.138.

the mother. It parallels, and foreshadows, the story of Pentheus and Agave; like Pentheus, Itylos was killed by his mother and his mother's sister.[23]

4 Conclusion

The relevance of the concept of spatial form for the reading of the *Dionysiaca* had in fact already been hinted at as early as the prologue in book 1, in which the narrator, in his list of the metamorphoses of Proteus, rearranges the Homeric order in which Proteus' shapes appear, so that warlike episodes (Gigantomachy, Indian war, war against Lycurgus) alternate regularly with peaceful ones (childhood of Dionysus, story of Aura, story of Icarius—even though these last two episodes have unpleasant, to say the least, conclusions). In this way the Nonnian narrator "affirme d'emblée sa préférence pour l'antithèse formelle au détriment de la succession chronologique."[24] It is therefore not surprising to see this principle applied further elsewhere in the epic.

The encyclopedic design of the narrator in the *Dionysiaca* can account for the length of the poem and for the multiplicity of secondary narratives woven into the main story. Although the narrator's primary aim is to tell the story of Dionysus, from his birth to his apotheosis, he also uses this story as an opportunity to recount a multiplicity of other myths. Structure is achieved, according to the concept of spatial form, through repetition, as in the case of the bathing scenes, or through breaking a story up into several episodes, as in the Philomela story. Through these narrative strategies, as well as displaying his literary ingenuity and innovative skills, the narrator encourages his narratee to draw associations between different elements of the story. This narrative structure also ties in with the visual aspect of the *Dionysiaca*: the reader can approach the poem like a painting, in which all of the details can be taken in at the same time, rather than relying on the chronological unfolding of the events.

23 The similarity is even more striking in Ovid's version in *Met.* 6.587–600 and 639–645.
24 Vian 1976, 9.

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CHAPTER 9

Some Aspects of Nonnus' Poetics: Antitypical Poetry in the *Dionysiaca*

Nestan Egetashvili

For many years, Nonnian scholars have believed that the *Dionysiaca* is a poem without any structure, composition, or poetic style.[1] However, a twentieth-century discussion on the geometric structure of the *Iliad* can also be relevant to this poem by Nonnus.[2] According to some Nonnian scholars,[3] a disorganized, chaotic, and diverse style is a major aspect of Nonnian poetry. Nonnus calls the Muses for assistance from the very first paragraph of the *Dionysiaca* to create a ποικίλον ὕμνον, i.e., a "colorful song." *Poikilia* defines one of the main styles of *Dionysiaca*. However, this is not the only major principle of style; Nonnus also refers to another formula which he calls a δίστιχος ἁρμονίη ("twofold harmony", *Dion.* 19.102). In this formula, one item or event is reflected in another, which in turn echoes the first one.

In the *Dionysiaca* we find antitypical images and tropes, and we can also observe the antitype style in the composition of the poem. In addition, the *Dionysiaca* imitates Homer's poems: as Nonnus says, it is created τύπον μιμηλὸν Ὁμήρου, ("in Homer's style" *Dion.* 25.8). Thus, if Nonnus' interpretation of the Gospel of St. John can be perceived as an antitype, then we can call the *Dionysiaca* the antitype of Homer's epic poems.

In order to use the antitype style, Nonnus describes the same episodes and images several times, simultaneously describing the episodes and images from other epics. For example, he writes about the six metamorphoses of Proteus (*Dion.* 1.19–32; 43.227–241) and while describing them, he keeps repeating lines from Homer's poem also referring to Proteus (*Od.* 4.414–417, 4.456–458).

The poet uses the following terms to juxtapose antitypical things and events: ἀντίτυπος ("blow and counter-blow," "echoed," "reflected," *Dion.* 6.79; 18.72;

1 See, e.g., Joseph Scaliger (*Epistolae* 276), Petrus Cunaeus (Захарова 1997, 30–32), Rudolf Keydell (Keydell 1927, 393–394).

2 The first scholars who attempted to find compositional symmetry in the *Dionysiaca* were Viktor Stegemann (1930, 33), Paul Collart (1960, 27), Gennaro D'Ippolito (1961, 58), and Francis Vian (1976, 18).

3 Weichert 1810, 21; Vian 1994, 86–98; Newbold 1999, 37–51.

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40.377), ἰσότυπος ("shaped alike," *Dion.* 2.553; 3.393; 8.43; 10.246), and τύπος ("model to be imitated," *Dion.* 4.7; 9.187; 12.159).[4] These terms are found frequently in the poem; however the most commonly used word is ἀντίτυπος, with the prefix "ἀντι-" not meaning "opposite" for Nonnus, in my opinion. In this chapter I discuss the duality of events in the *Dionysiaca* and analyze how the author juxtaposes different things and events (phenomena), highlighting both similarities and differences to convey the antitype style.

1 Stained Skin, Vine, and Starry Sky

In the first book of the *Dionysiaca*, Nonnus asks the Muses to dress him up in a nebris (*Dion.* 1.34–36):

> ἄξατέ μοι νάρθηκα, Μιμαλλόνες, ὠμαδίην δὲ
> νεβρίδα ποικιλόνωτον ἐθήμονος ἀντὶ χιτῶνος
> σφίγξατέ μοι στέρνοισι.[5]
>
> Bring me the fennel, Mimallons! On my shoulders in place of the wonted kirtle, bind, I pray, tight over my breast a dapple-back fawnskin.[6]

Nonnus often mentions the nebris in the poem, as it is worn by the main character of the *Dionysiaca*. It seems that tragedians had introduced the term nebris (νεβρίς)[7] into Greek poetry, therefore it is found neither in Homer nor in the works of later epic authors.

Nonnus considers the nebris to be colorful; it is dappled.[8] Nonnus gives priority to the nebris over other attributes of the cult of Dionysus, as it resembles the starry sky in the poem and is its antitype. We read in the text (*Dion.* 9.184–187):

> Καὶ χροῒ λαχνήεντας ἀνεχλαίνωσε χιτῶνας
> Εὔιος ἀρτιτέλεστον ἔχων παιδήιον ἔβην,
> δαιδαλέην ἐλάφοιο φέρων ὤμοισι καλύπτρην,
> αἰθερίων μιμηλὸν ἔχων τύπον αἰόλον ἄστρων.

4 LSJ s.vv.
5 The edition of the *Dionysiaca* used here is that of Page 1956.
6 All translations of the *Dionysiaca* are by Rouse 1940.
7 "Fawnskin," LSJ s.v. νεβρίς.
8 Euripides mentions "multicolored nebrises" in the *Bacchae* (249 ποικίλασι νεβρίσι).

> The time of boyhood just come, Euios draped furry tunics upon his body, and carried to cover his shoulders the dappled skin of a stag, imitating the sky spotted with stars.

When Dionysus went to the Indian War, he "hung a furry fawnskin over his chest, a chest-piece dappled with spots like the stars" (*Dion.* 14.238–239 νεβρίδα λαχνήεσσαν ἐπὶ στέρνοιο καθάψας, / στικτὸν ἔχων θώρηκα τύπον κεχαραγμένον ἄστρων). In another passage, the satyrs "girt about their chests the skins of long-antlered stags dappled like stars in the sky" (*Dion* 14.133–134 οἱ δὲ τανυκραίρων ἐλάφων ἀντίρροπον ἄστρων / ποικίλον ἐν στέρνοισιν ἀνεζώννυντο χιτῶνα). Robert Eisler points out that the idea of identifying the skin of a spotted animal with the starry sky is connected to the Orphic tradition.[9] It can be added that the identification of the spotted skin with the sky may also be related to the cult of Dionysus. One of the Orphic fragments (238 Kern) describes the garment of a Dionysian priest as a spotted skin, which is identified with the starry sky:

> δέρμα πολύστικτον θηρὸς κατὰ δεξιὸν ὦμον
> ἄστρων δαιδαλέων μίμημ᾽ ἱεροῦ τε πόλοιο.[10]
>
> On the right shoulder, a pelt of many-spotted animal similar to the dappled stars and holy sky.

It is interesting to mention that according to Eisler, the statue of the Egyptian priest Aanem was wrapped in a star-studded leopard skin.[11]

Nonnus also calls a sphere "a round revolving sphere, the shape of the sky, the image of the universe" (*Dion.* 6.64–65 εὔκυκλον ἀείρας / σφαῖραν ἑλισσομένην, τύπον αἰθέρος, εἰκόνα κόσμου). He describes the robe of Heracles Astrochiton as a "patterned robe like the sky, and image of the universe" (*Dion.* 40.416 ποικίλον εἷμα φέρων, τύπον αἰθέρος, εἰκόνα κόσμου). Astrochiton himself is the personification of the starry sky in the poem.

The nebris, or the white spotted dark pelt of a fawn, has, like other objects and events in Nonnus' poem, a pair and an antitype: the light-colored skin of a dark-spotted leopard. This animal is closely related to the cult of Dionysus. In paintings on ancient pottery and on later mosaics, the image of Dionysus

9 Eisler 1910, 102.
10 The edition of the Orphic fragments used here is that of Kern 1922.
11 The statue of Aanem, the second priest of Amun (1390–1353 BC), found in Thebes (Turin Egyptian Museum). Eisler 1910, 102.

mounted on a wheeled cart pulled by leopards is a frequent theme.[12] The leopard and its skin remind us more of Homer's world than a deer does: First, a leopard is one of the metamorphoses of Proteus in the *Odyssey* (4.457). Second, Menelaos is robed in a leopard's skin, παρδαλέῃ ποικίλῃ, in the *Iliad* (10.29–30).

We find many episodes in the *Dionysiaca* where the skin of a leopard and a nebris are paired. These are also characterized by the same epithets. For example, Dionysus promises to tear to pieces "the many-speckled skins of pards" (*Dion.* 16.96 δέρματα πορδαλίων πολυδαίδαλα) and the "dappled fawnskins" (*Dion.* 16.99 νεβρίσι δαιδαλέῃσι) for his lover Nicaia if the virgin falls in love with him. Also, the poet describes in a similar way two bacchants: one who "covered her chest with the spotted skin of a panther" and another who "put on like a tunic the dappled skins of mountain fawns" (*Dion.* 14. 357–359 ἄλλη ποικιλόνωτον ἐπὶ στέρνοιο καλύπτρην / πορδαλίων, ἑτέρη δὲ κατὰ χροὸς οἷα χιτῶνα / στικτὰ φιλοσκοπέλων ἐνεδύσατο δέρματα νεβρῶν).

The poem also mentions the lynx (λύγκας, *Dion* 9.188) and the tiger (τίγρις, *Dion.* 6.197). Nonnus refers to them with the same epithets as the fawn and the leopard: αἰόλος ("glittering," *Dion.* 6.197), αἰολόνωτος ("with a spangled back," *Dion.* 9.173), and δαιδάλεος, στικτός ("dappled, spotted," *Dion.* 11.69; 40.265). Interestingly, Nonnus also mentions a snake as one of the spotted animals.

The nebris is also related to another symbol of the cult of Dionysus in the *Dionysiaca*, namely the vine. When Ampelos, lover of Dionysus, is transformed into a vine, his nebris is transformed into the grapes (*Dion.* 12.179–180):

> … καὶ αὐτὴ νεβρὶς
> ἀεξομένης πολυδαίδαλον ἄνθος ὀπώρης.
>
> His very fawnskin changed into the many-colored bloom of the growing fruit.

It is not coincidental that here Nonnus uses the same epithet, πολυδαίδαλον ("colorful"), to describe the colors of grapes as he did for the nebris, the leopard, and other spotted animals.

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12 For example, on side A of the "Persephone krater," an Apulian red-figure volute-krater, (c. 340 BC), Antikensammlung (Collection of Classical Antiquities), Berlin; Roman mosaic, house of Liber Pater, Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne (c. AD 300), Sabratha, Libya; Dionysus in a chariot drawn by leopards from the "Villa of Good Fortune" at Plynthos (fourth century BC).

2 Wine and Its Doubles

Wine plays an important role in the rituals and beliefs of the Greeks and Romans. According to Richard Onians, the ritual pouring of wine (χοαί) in memory of those who have "passed on" is connected to the belief that there is a close relation between plants and humans: the consumption of liquid is essential for human existence, as it is for plants and their fertility.[13] In this particular case, wine is a parallel for the vital liquid of sustenance that was associated with the backbone, brain, or sperm of humans or animals and the sap of plants. This idea is also related to the belief that Dionysus and the bacchants could extract water, wine, milk, and honey from anywhere (Eur. *Ba.* 692–697).

One of the epiphanies of the wine god in the *Dionysiaca* is the vine. When he is captured by Tyrsenian pirates he gets transformed into bunches of grapes (*Dion.* 45.145–146):

> ἀμφὶ δὲ πηδαλίοισιν ὑπερκύψασα θαλάσσης
> Βακχιὰς ἀμπελόεντι κάμαξ ἐβαρύνετο καρπῷ.

> The Bacchic stem popped out of the sea round the steering-oars all heavy with bunches of grapes.

A fascinating example of the similarity between the vine and the human is the postmortem transformation of Ampelos into a vine (*Dion.* 12.175–181):

> Ἄμπελος αὐτοτέλεστος ἑὴν ἠλλάξατο μορφήν,
> καὶ πέλε νήδυμον ἄνθος. ἀμειβομένοιο δὲ νεκροῦ
> γαστὴρ θάμνος ἔην περιμήκετος, ἄκρα δὲ χειρῶν
> ἀκρεμόνες βλάστησαν, ἐνερρίζωντο δὲ ταρσοί,
> βόστρυχα βότρυες ἦσαν, ἐμορφώθη δὲ καὶ αὐτὴ
> νεβρὶς ἀεξομένης πολυδαίδαλον ἄνθος ὀπώρης,
> ἀμπελόεις δὲ κόρυμβος ἔην δολιχόσκιος αὐχήν.

> For Ampelos, the lovely dead, rose of himself and took the form of a creeping snake, and became the healtrouble flower. As the body changed, his belly was a long stalk, his fingers grew into toptendrils, his feet took root, his curlclusters were grapeclusters, his very fawnskin changed into the manycoloured bloom of the growing fruit, his long neck became a bunch of grapes.

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13 Onians 1988, 210–220.

In addition, we meet Staphylos, Botrys, and Metheus in the poem as members of one family and the hosts of Dionysus.[14]

Wine in the *Dionysiaca* is the medication for wounds and injuries. Dionysus treats fighters wounded in the Indian War with his "healing ivy" (παιήονι κισσῷ, 29.155) and "wine protecting from evil" (οἶνον ἀλεξητῆρα, 29.156). However, wine can also have a hazardous effect. For example, Dionysus taught the art of making wine to the hospitable Icarios (*Dion.* 47.70–124):

> [The] old gardener passed on to other countrymen the gifts of Bromios with their vintage of grapes, and taught them how to plant and care for the viny growth of Dionysos; he poured into his rustic mixer streams of wine inexhaustible, and cheered the hearts of banqueters with cup after cup, releasing the fragrant liquid from his wineskins … (The countrymen) made a wild revel over the wine which dazed their wits. Their eyes rolled, their pale cheeks grew red … Their heads grew heavy with the drink; the veins were swollen upon their foreheads … Then the company of countrymen driven by murderous infatuation charged upon poor Icarios in maniac fury … one holding an iron pole axe, one with a shovel for a weapon in his hands, one holding the corn reaping sickle … all striking the old man: one came near with a goad and pierced his body with its flesh-cutting spike.[15]

One of the antitheses of wine in the poem is honey. Nonnus uses the same epithet—δαιδαλέη ("dappled," "spotted," *Dion.* 5.228)—for honeycomb as for the grapevine, since they are similarly colorful and variegated. Here are some examples: "much travail of honeybee he brought, in the riddled comb her masterpiece" (πολλὴν … ἐκόμισσε μελίσσης / δαιδαλέην ὠδῖνα πολυτρήτοιο λοχείης,

14 Σταφυλή, Βότρυς "a bunch of grapes," Μέθη "drunkenness."

15 *Dion.* 47.70–124 Ἄλλοις δ᾽ ἀγρονόμοισι γέρων φυτοεργὸς ἀλωεύς / δῶρα φέρων Βρομίοιο καὶ ἀμπελόεσσαν ὀπώρην / οἰνοφύτους ἐδίδαξε φυτηκομίας Διονύσου. / καὶ νομίῳ κρητῆρι βαλὼν ῥόον ἄσπετον οἴνου / δαινυμένους ηὔφραινεν ἐπασσυτέροισι κυπέλλοις, / οἰνοδόκων θυόεσσαν ἀναπτύξας χύσιν ἀσκῶν … / Ἀγρονόμοι δ᾽ ἀρύοντες ἐπασσυτέροισι κυπέλλοις / πάντες ἐβακχεύθησαν ἀμερσινόῳ φρένας οἴνῳ. / ὄμματα δ᾽ ἐπλάζοντο, φιλακρήτοις δὲ κυπέλλοις / ἄργυφα πορφύροντο παρήια, γειοπόνων δὲ / στήθεα θερμαίνοντο, ποτῷ δ᾽ βαρύνετο κόρση, / καὶ φλέβες οἰδαίνοντος ἐκυμαίνοντο καρήνου … / Καὶ χορὸς ἀγρονόμων φονίῳ δεδονημένος οἴστρῳ / τλήμονος Ἰκαρίοιο κατέτρεχε θυιάδι λύσσῃ, / οἶά τε φαρμακόεντα κερασσαμένου δόλον οἴνου, / ὃς μὲν ἔχων βουπλῆγα σιδήρεον, ὃς δὲ μακέλλῃ / θωρήξας ἕο χεῖρας, ὁ δὲ σταχυητόμον ἅρπην / κουφίζων, ἕτερος δὲ λίθον περίμετρον ἀείρων, / ἄλλος ἀνεπτοίητο καλαύροπα χειρὶ τιταίνων, / γηραλέον πλήσσοντες. ἑλὼν δέ τις ἐγγὺς ἱμάσθλην / Ἰκαρίου τέτρηνε δέμας ταμεσίχροϊ κέντρῳ. For a detailed discussion on the lines, see Spanoudakis 2007, 39–53.

Dion. 5.227–228); “She pressed the bee’s riddled travail of many cells, and mixed the voiceful comb in a sapient cup” (περιθλίψασα μελίσσης / δαιδαλέην ὠδῖνα πολυτρήτοιο λοχείης, / κηρία φωνήεντα σοφῷ κεράσασα κυπέλλῳ· *Dion.* 41.218–220). When Ampelos gets transformed into a vine: “his very fawnskin changed into the manycoloured bloom of the growing fruit” (καὶ αὐτὴ / νεβρὶς ἀεξομένης πολυδαίδαλον ἄνθος ὀπώρης, *Dion.* 12.179–180). Respectively, wine is comparable to honey, which is referred to by the following epithets: αἰόλα / ποικίλα δῶρα (μελίσσης),[16] the “polychromatic[17] gifts (of the bee)”; δαιδαλέη ὠδὶς (μελίσσης).[18]

According to a myth narrated in the *Dionysiaca*, Dionysus and Aristaios, the discoverer of honey, competed with each other. They entertained the gods of Olympus with wine and honey, and the gods eventually gave priority to wine. This myth appears twice in the poem (*Dion.* 13.253–270; 19.241–260).

Nonnus also equates wine to nectar as a link between the heavens and the earth. Nonnus calls wine “the earthly image of heavenly nectar” (νέκταρος οὐρανίου χθόνιον τύπον, *Dion.* 12.159).

3 Painting and Writing

One of the art forms described by Nonnus in the *Dionysiaca* that is not referred to in earlier epic poetry, is painting. While classifying art, Plotinus perceived painting and pantomime to be closely connected to each other.[19] Nonnus suggests basically the same connection. The poet often describes pantomime in terms of painting: καταγράφω “to scratch away,”[20] χαράσσω “to make sharp”[21] (*Dion.* 19.198–200; 19.225–226):

> ἐχόρευε Μάρων ἑλικώδεϊ ταρσῷ,
> δεξιὸν ἐκ λαιοῖο μετήλυδα ταρσὸν ἀμείβων,
> σιγὴν ποικιλόμυθον ἀναυδέι χείρι χαράσσων.

> Maron danced with winding step, passing the changes right over left, and figuring a silent eloquence of hand inaudible.

16 *Dion.* 5.257, 272.
17 LSJ s.v.
18 *Dion.* 13.272; 17.371; 26.187.
19 Gigli Piccardi 1984, 58.
20 LSJ s.v. καταγράφω.
21 LSJ s.v. χαράσσω.

Σειληνὸς δ' ἐχόρευε. πολυστρέπτοιο δὲ τέχνης
σύμβολα τεχνήεντα κατέγραφε σιγαλέη χείρ.

Now Seilenos danced: his hand without speech traced the cues of his art in all their intricate mazes.

In the poetry of Nonnus, painting is related to predictions and foretelling the fate of the world. Painters mentioned in the poem are Phanes[22] the first-born and the snake Ophion.[23]

In Nonnus' works the prediction of the world's destiny is linked to astrology. Therefore, paintings of Phanes are located in the house of Helios and their depiction is full of inexplicable astrological details. "In these are recorded in one group all the oracles which the prophetic hand of Phanes first-born engraved as ordained for the world, and drew (ἐπέγραφε) with his pencil the house (οἶκον) proper for each" (*Dion.* 12.34–35). Destiny itself is "multicoloured" (ποικίλα).

A part of Phanes' painting is described as follows (*Dion.* 12.75–78):

καὶ ἱστοπόνος Φιλομήλη
ἔσσεται αἰολόδειρος ὑποτρύζουσα χελιδών,
μαρτυρίην βοόωσα λιπογλώσσοιο σιωπῆς
δαίδαλα φωνήεντα σοφῷ γράψασα χιτῶνι.

Philomela the busy weaver shall be a twittering swallow with tuneful throat, and cry abroad the witness of her tongueless silence which once she skillfully inscribed like talking words upon a robe.

We can compare Phanes' art with that of Philomela, who depicted her misfortune on the robe associated with the mute girl's narrative. Similarly, Arachne—while knitting—used different patterns instead of verbal communication in order to convey her message (Ovid. *Met.* 6.1–145).

Alphabetic scripts are depicted as a paradox of spoken silence; in the poem, Cadmus introduces them to people. Nonnus refers to scripts as "a graven model of speaking silence" (σιγὴ ἀσίγητος, *Dion.* 4.263). Supposedly, a written script is an antithesis of speech in the poem, because although it is similar to speech, it is different because a script is silent.

22 In the *Dionysiaca* Phanes is (a) a god recognized as a deity older than Chronos, (b) one of the centaurs; see Захарова 1997, 534.

23 A Titan and an oracle. Once the snake Ophion had ruled over the sky; see Захарова 1997, 525.

4 Speech and Silence

Speech and silence are one of Nonnus' favorite antitheses. The language of gestures in the poem expresses speech through silence.[24] For example, Electra uses gestures to call her daughter Harmonia, an act that was widespread in Mediterranean countries (*Dion.* 4.5–7):

> … καὶ Ἄρεος ἄζυγι κούρῃ
> ὄρθοα δινεύουσα νοήμονι δάκτυλα παλμῷ
> Ἁρμονίην ἐκάλεσσε τύπῳ τεχνήμονι φωνῆς.
>
> (She) curving her extended fingers with a significant movement towards Ares' unwedded daughter; she beckoned Harmonia by this clever imitation of speech.

The second version of the language of gestures is a pointed finger: "Peitho pointed a finger to indicate the corresponding words in her mind and by this voiceless herald (σιγαλέῳ κήρυκι) showed the house" of Harmonia to Cadmus (*Dion.* 3.127–128).

In the *Dionysiaca*, eyes express anger and sadness: ἀμφὶ δὲ γαμβρῷ / ὄμματα λοξὰ τίταινε χόλου κήρυκι σιωπῇ, "(Deriades) looked askance at his goodson in silent witnessing anger" (*Dion.* 30.38–39). In another passage Cypris, the lover of Adonis, saw a downcast Pasithea and ἐκ δὲ προσώπου / Πασιθέης ἐνόησεν ἄχος κήρυκι σιωπῇ ("understood the grief heralded by her silent face", *Dion.* 33.26–27). Without the help of eyes and hands, silent communication can express sadness through facial expressions or through the silent witnesses of tear-streaked cheeks (σιγαλέαι κήρυκες, "silent heralds," *Dion.* 4.11). Although tears are "silent" (σιγαλέοι, *Dion.* 5.383), they can convey information.

The poem has another antitype of silence and speech in the form of pantomime. In Homer's poems, the Muses sang only: Μοῦσαι δ' ἐννέα πᾶσαι ἀμειβόμεναι ὀπὶ καλῇ / θρήνεον (*Od.* 24.60–61). Exactly the same is said in *Theogony* by Hesiod, where the author narrates how the Muses taught him to sing when he was guarding sheep on the top of Mount Helicon (*Theog.* 22–23; 31–32). From the very first paragraph of the *Dionysiaca* the Muses are depicted as dancing around Proteus with cymbals, while their song is not mentioned (*Dion.* 1.11–15):

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24 Newbold 1992, 271–283.

Ἄξατέ μοι νάρθηκα, τινάξατε κύμβαλα, Μοῦσαι,
καὶ παλάμῃ δότε θύρσον ἀειδομένου Διονύσου.
ἀλλὰ χοροῦ ψαύοντα, Φάρῳ παρὰ γείτονι νήσῳ,
στήσατέ μοι Πρωτῆα πολύτροπον, ὄφρα φανείη
ποικίλον εἶδος ἔχων, ὅτι ποικίλον ὕμνον ἀράσσω.

Bring me the fennel; rattle the cymbals, ye Muses! Put in my hand the wand of Dionysos whom I sing: but bring me a partner for your dance in the neighboring island of Pharos, Proteus of many turns, that he may appear in all his diversity of shapes, since I twang my harp to a diversity of songs.

In contrast, the Muses dance and sing in another passage of the poem at the wedding of Harmonia and Cadmus (*Dion.* 5.101–107):

εἰς γάμον Ἁρμονίης Ἰσμήνιος ἦλθεν Ἀπόλλων
ἑπτατόνῳ κιθάρῃ φιλοτήσιον ὕμνον ἀράσσων.
Καὶ μέλος ἐκρούσαντο βιοσσόον ἐννέα Μοῦσαι,
Καὶ παλάμας ἐλέλιζε Πολύμνια μαῖα χορείης,
μιμηλὴν δ' ἐχάραξεν ἀναυδέος εἰκόνα φωνῆς,
φθεγγομένη παλάμῃσι σοφὸν τύπον ἔμφρονι σιγῇ
ὄμματα δινεύουσα.

Dancing with the immortals came Ismenian Apollo to Harmonia's wedding, while he twanged a hymn of love on his seven string harp. The nine Muses too struck up a life-stirring melody: Polymnia nursing mother of the dance waved her arms, and sketched in the air an image of a soundless voice, speaking with hands and moving eyes in a graphic picture of silence full of meaning.

Undoubtedly, Polymnia performs a pantomime in this section of the poem. It is regarded by Nonnus as a wise (σοφός) and intelligent (νοήμων) dance.

Pantomime, completely unfamiliar to traditional Greek epic poetry, arose during the Hellenistic period. During the Roman Empire it became one of the most prevalent types of theatrical performance.[25] It is interesting that during the burial ceremony of Staphylos in the *Dionysiaca*, the competition is

25 In Xenophon's *Symposium* the dancers performed a pantomime of the wedding of Ariadne and Dionysus (9.2–7). About the pantomime under the Roman Empire, see also Hall 2013, 451–476.

not arranged as a chariot race, but as a dance of pantomime. In this passage, Maron[26] (who accompanies Dionysus) and Silenus[27] compete with each other. The competition ends with the defeat of Silenus because he falls down (according to the rules, this disqualifies him) and then turns into a river.[28] In this passage Nonnus refers to this style of dance as σιγὴν ποικιλόμυθον "silent eloquence" (*Dion.* 19.198–200):

> … ἐχόρευε Μάρον ἑλικώδεϊ ταρσῷ,
> δεξιὸν ἐκ λαιοῖο μετήλυδα ταρσὸν ἀμείβων,
> σιγὴν ποικιλόμυθον ἀναυδέι χειρὶ χαράσσων.

> Maron danced with winding step, passing the changes right over left, and figuring a silent eloquence of hand inaudible.

The phrase σιγὴν ποικιλόμυθον exactly matches the unusual style of Nonnus: In the *Dionysiaca* even the mirror answers questions as a σιγαλέῳ κήρυκι ("voiceless herald", *Dion.* 5.596). The music from the Amphion's harp can make stones move, but the harp is only the image on the shield of Dionysus, and Nonnus does not forget to mention that it is a σιγαλέη λύρῃ, a "silent harp" (*Dion.* 25.424). In the poem, the dogs of Hephaestus are "silent works of art" (τεχνήμονι σιγῇ, *Dion.* 3.172), but it soon becomes clear that they bark incessantly. Only Proteus roars, then gets transformed into a lion, or hisses like a snake, putting on many faces to avoid Menelaus' questions and preserve the silence (*Dion.* 1.16–33). Echo, the favorite of Nonnus, repeats any words and presumably is the most eloquent creature on the earth, but at the same time, every word pronounced by Echo is only a repetition (*Dion.* 8.13–30).

5 Conclusions

As seen above, there was an attempt in this chapter to discuss the duality of events in the *Dionysiaca* and analyze how the author juxtaposes different things and events (phenomena), highlighting both similarities and differences, to convey the antitype style. The poet uses the following terms to apply the connection of antitypical items or events: ἀντίτυπος, ἰσότυπος, τύπος, the meaning

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26 The son of Silenus and the charioteer for Dionysus.
27 An elderly man, son of the earth, a friend, a teacher, and a drunk companion of Dionysus.
28 Fauth 1981, 150–152; D'Ippolito 1962, 1–14.

of these terms by Nonnus are approximately "simultaneously similar and different." For example, the nebris resembles the starry sky in the poem because it is colorful and stained and is its antitype (9.184–187). However, the nebris, which is a dark skin with white dots, has another antitype: the light-colored hide of a dark-dotted leopard (14.357–359; 16.96–99). The nebris is also related to another symbol of the cult of Dionysus in the poem, the vine (12.178–180). It is not coincidental that Nonnus uses the same epithet, πολυδαίδαλον ("colorful"), to describe the colors of grapes as being like the starry sky, a leopard, and other spotted animals. In addition to this, written script is an antithesis of speech in the poem; letters are depicted as a paradigm of spoken silence (σιγὴ ἀσίγητος, *Dion.* 4.263). Another antitype of speech is silence, which is expressed in the language of gestures (*Dion.* 4.5–7; 3.127–128) and through pantomime (19.198–200). Nonnus refers to this style of dance as σιγὴν ποικιλόμυθον ("silent eloquence", 19.200). This phrase closely matches the unusual style of Nonnus, distinguishing him from other epic authors, especially from Homer, despite the fact that the *Dionysiaca* imitates Homer's poems. As Nonnus says, the *Dionysiaca* is created τύπον μιμηλὸν Ὁμήρου ("in the style of Homer", 25.8).

Thus, based on this discussion, we can consider the *Dionysiaca* as an antitype of Homer's poems. A commonly known opinion from old books of the history of literature is that Nonnus imitates Homer to create his poem and the forty-eight books of the *Dionysiaca* are just imitations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.[29] This opinion may be the most correct thing to say about the *Dionysiaca*. But it should also be specified that Nonnus imitates Homer by responding to similarities and differences at the same time. It is interesting that Nonnus sees his great and beautiful mission in such imitation. Therefore, we cannot even resist the words of Neil Hopkinson, describing the *Dionysiaca* as the "most unHomerlike of epics."[30]

The text of the *Dionysiaca* often goes beyond the limits of a heroic epic genre and demonstrates the tendencies of various genres. The author applies the styles characteristic of Greek novels and of historic, scientific-medical, astrological, and geographic prose. There are also signs of didactic epic poetry, pastoral and Alexandrian epyllions in the poem. Despite this, Barbara Abel-Willmanns emphasizes that the *Dionysiaca* is an epic poem created with Homer's traditions and not with any other genre.[31] Nonnus remains faithful to Homer's model, however he perceives this model in its own way. That is why if

29 Näcke 1835; Грабарь-Пассек 1960, 327–334.
30 Hopkinson 1994, 9.
31 Abel-Willmanns 1977, 88.

the *Paraphrase* of Nonnus is an antitype of St. John's Gospel, we can consider the *Dionysiaca* as an antitype of Homer's poems.

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CHAPTER 10

Ἁρμονίη κόσμου and ἁρμονίη ἀνδρῶν: On the Different Concepts of Harmony in the *Dionysiaca* of Nonnus

Marta Otlewska-Jung

Already in the first book of the *Dionysiaca*, readers become acquainted with several different meanings of the term ἁρμονία all at once.[1] In a dramatic episode, earthborn Typhon threatens to seize power over the universe after stealing the sinews and thunderbolts of Zeus.[2] Nonnus describes Typhon as a giant with disproportionately long arms, multiple heads of wild animals (leopards, lions, bulls, and boars) and snakes growing from his body.[3] He represents chaos in every aspect of his physical appearance and speech. His voice produces "not one concordant echo, but a babel of screaming sounds."[4] To prevent Typhon from taking power, Zeus turns to Cadmus and promises him a precious reward for his help: "I will make you savior of the world's harmony, and the husband of the lady Harmonia."[5] Cadmus finally manages to defeat Typhon with a simple tune from his syrinx.

In this scene, the term ἁρμονία appears in three different meanings. First, it describes the well-ordered structure of the universe threatened by monstrous Typhon. Here, harmony is presented as the opposite of chaos. Second, it is the name of a young lady of celestial origins, daughter of Aphrodite and Ares, a trophy in Cadmus' difficult battle. By this telling name, harmony is also related to a prosperous relationship. Third, the term refers to the essence of Zeus' plan: to distract the giant with a melody (ἁρμονία) he is not able to understand and thereby to defeat him.[6] Thus, already at the beginning of his poem, Nonnus makes clear that the notion of harmony plays a significant role in the *Dionysiaca*.

1 I am very grateful to Filip Doroszewski, Katarzyna Jażdżewska, and Alex Poulos for their support and remarks.
2 For this episode, see *Dion.* 1.154–2.659. For Typhon's vision of chaos, see Komorowska 2004.
3 *Dion.* 1.156–162.
4 *Dion.* 2.251. English translations of the *Dionysiaca*, unless otherwise noted, are by Rouse (1940).
5 *Dion.* 1.396–397 σὲ γὰρ ῥυτῆρα τελέσσω / ἁρμονίης κόσμοιο καὶ Ἁρμονίης παρακοίτην. In this chapter, the Greek text of the *Dionysiaca* is quoted after the Budé edition (1976–2006).
6 *Dion.* 1.520 ἁρμονίης ἤκουε καὶ οὐ γίνωσκε Τυφωεύς ("Typhoeus … listened to the melody and knew nothing").

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For Nonnus, harmony seems to be a necessary condition for the existence of the world in which the action of the epic takes place. He also uses this term to mark essential aspects of civilization like music, alphabet, writing, laws, and architecture. In his epic, harmony is related to love and marriage, but it also indicates life in both a cosmic space and the human body. Moreover, Nonnus introduces two protagonists bearing this very name: Lady Harmonia, Cadmus' future bride and Allmother Harmonia, whose palace is a temple of wisdom and stability and represents the universe. Although these protagonists seem unrelated and never meet in person, I will argue that they both personify Nonnus' concept of harmony in complementary ways.

Nonnus underlines the broad spectrum of fields to which the term ἁρμονία applies by playing on the polyvalence of the Greek term.[7] Naturally, such handling corresponds to the principle of ποικιλία (variety), which rules the content of his epic. However, a look into the lexica shows how frequently the term is used in the *Dionysiaca*. In the entire poem, ἁρμονία is mentioned twenty-five times as an abstract notion; Lady Harmonia appears forty-nine times and Allmother Harmonia is referred to by name six times.[8]

In this chapter, I want to explore the meaning of harmony in Nonnus' mythological narration by examining the two personifications of ἁρμονία. First, I will look at Lady Harmonia as a divine reward granted to Cadmus by Zeus and analyze her role in the epic. Then, I will turn to the couple's wedding in Thebes and the complementary depiction of their love union in Libya. I will discuss the significance of both incidents for the understanding of human harmony and its parallels to the Pythagorean concept of the harmony of the spheres. Later, I will scrutinize the role of Allmother Harmonia and her palace as the representation of divine harmony within the *Dionysiaca*. Finally, I will put my conclusions into the context of the main narrative of the epic: the god Dionysus and his mission of civilizing earth.

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7 In the *Dionysiaca*, ἁρμονία refers to several meanings: the sound of music (e.g. 1.520 melody of a syrinx; 12.148 melody of an aulos; 13.362 melody of a song); a general frame, order, or structure (e.g. 2.222, 653; 41.162 order of the universe); a living body (19.214 resurrection of Tylus); writing and alphabet (4.262); marriage (3.375; 24.265). The wordplays usually refer to the relation of Harmonia, a protagonist, with harmony in an abstract sense (e.g. 1.397 for Lady Harmonia and the harmony of the universe; 3.375 for Lady Harmonia and the harmony of marriage; 41.332 for Allmother Harmonia and the harmony on earth).

8 Cf. Peek 1968–1975, 182; Fajen and Wacht 2008, vol. 1, 268–270; Vian and Fayant 2006, 58–59. In the Homeric epics, ἁρμονία is used only three times and always in plural, once in *Il.* 22.255 for "agreement"; and twice in *Od.* 5.248, 361 for "means of joining." As a protagonist, Harmonia appears only in *Hom. Hymn* 3.195 in a circle dance in Olympus together with the Seasons, the Graces, Hebe, and Aphrodite. Cf. Tebben 1977, 26; 1994, vol. 1, 141; 1998, vol. 1, 191.

1 A Gift of the Gods

From the very first mention in the *Dionysiaca*, Lady Harmonia is entwined with the character of Cadmus. In the Typhon episode, Cadmus appears as an aimless wanderer, searching in vain for his abducted sister Europe.[9] It is Zeus' request for help and his promise of Harmonia as a reward that provides Cadmus with a new aim and inspires him to heroic deeds. Later, she stands at his side to support his propagation of civilization.

As a protagonist, however, Lady Harmonia remains rather pale. After joining Cadmus, she becomes a silent shadow at his side, his fellow companion. Her significance lies most notably in her contribution to Cadmus' achievements. She ensures the success of challenging tasks such as killing a dragon or fighting against warriors in Libya. But she has no other function in Cadmus' deeds besides being his talisman, a celestial gift he brings to the world. She becomes his attribute.

Nonnus does not provide a lot of information about Lady Harmonia's character and outward appearance. Instead, he establishes her place within the complex web of human and divine entities through genealogy. Through her biological parents, Aphrodite and Ares, Harmonia is an heiress to the Olympians, which later grants her daughter Semele a due place in heavens as Thyone.[10] Harmonia unites the opposite domains of her parents, love and war, and therefore, she represents the value of harmony in the Empedoclean sense: as the balance between φιλία, love, and νεῖκος, strife.[11] She is a half-sister of Eros, the god of love, who in the epic also represents the restorative power of nature,[12] and Beroe, the eponym of the city of Beirut, which is praised for its law school and propagation of Roman law.[13]

Despite her celestial origins, Harmonia grows up on the island Samothrace in the palace of Electra, her foster mother.[14] Electra is a daughter of Atlas and

9 *Dion.* 1.138–139.

10 *Dion.* 8.407–412.

11 Cf. Diels-Kranz 31 B27.3; 96.4. For Harmonia as a personification, see Jouan 1980.

12 In this role, Eros appears alongside Physis, Helios, Zeus, and Aion. For Physis, who restore the universe through harmony, see *Dion.* 2.650–654; for Helios, see 2.654–659; for Zeus, see 38.412–415; for Aion, see 6.371–372. Eros and Physis restore earth after a deluge in 7.1–6. Cf. also Eros' title ἁρμονίης κόσμοιο φερέσβιος ἡνιοχεύς ("lifegiving guide of the cosmic harmony", trans. mine, 41.130).

13 For the Beroe episode, see books 41–43. Aphrodite mentions her three children, Beroe, Eros, and Lady Harmonia after her visit at Allmother Harmonia's palace, in *Dion.* 41.408–427.

14 In the mythological tradition, Harmonia is usually a daughter of Aphrodite and Ares, see

the seventh Pleiad, who will later join the constellation of her sisters.[15] Through her foster family, Harmonia is thus in two different ways related to the starry sky: first by her grandfather, Atlas, who separates heaven from earth so that they do not merge or destroy, but reflect and correspond to each other;[16] second, by the Pleiades, who are seven in number and therefore used to be associated with the notion of the harmony of the spheres.[17] On Samothrace, Harmonia grows up with two foster brothers who link her to the areas of warriorship and city-founding. Harmonia's favorite sibling, Emathion, later joins Dionysus' campaign against the Indians,[18] while absent Dardanos, founder of Troy and ancestor of Aeneas, links her to the future Roman Empire.[19]

Thus, Lady Harmonia unites both divine and earthly aspects. Her union with Cadmus in a "harmonious marriage" (ἁρμονίῃ ὑμεναίων)[20] marks her connection to the earth.[21] However, before Harmonia takes her place at Cadmus' side, Nonnus presents her as a beautiful and capricious young lady.[22] In describing the first encounter of Cadmus and Harmonia, Nonnus indicates that it was no love at first sight and that Harmonia only comes to represent the notion of harmony in union with Cadmus.

In this scene, Cadmus prefers a polite conversation on genealogies with Electra to getting acquainted with Harmonia.[23] He needs the divine intervention of Hermes to finally make his proposal of marriage.[24] Harmonia reacts disparagingly and with tears at Cadmus' advances. In her view, the most important

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Hes. *Th.* 933; Apollod. *Epit.* 3.25, Paus. 9.5.2, Diod. 4.2.1; 5.48.2; Hyg. *Praef.*; Stat. *Theb.* 2.265. In other accounts, she is a daughter of the Pleiad Electra and Zeus, see Diod. 5.48.2. Nonnus seems to reconcile these two versions in his narrative, cf. Chuvin 1976, 9. For the source of the episode on Samothrace, cf. Chuvin 1976, 8–19. For the tradition of Samothrace, see Vian 1963, 64–68; Chuvin 1976, 14–15; Rocchi 1989, 24–40.

15 *Dion.* 3.351–354; 8.77; 13.412.

16 *Dion.* 2.260–265; 3.349–350; 38.352–354.

17 Cf. Arist. *Met.* 1093a; DK 58 C2 (= Porph. *Vit. Pyth.* 41); see also Csapo 2008, 266.

18 *Dion.* 13.393–395.

19 *Dion.* 3.195–203.

20 *Dion.* 3.375; cf. also 24.265.

21 For Cadmus' association to κόσμος, see Olympiod. *ad Plat. Phaed.* 95a.

22 As a daughter of Aphrodite, Harmonia is certainly beautiful, to which her other name Χαρίτη (*Dion.* 13.339) and the attribute ῥοδῶπις ("rosy-cheek", 13.350) refer. Her initial resistance is best expressed in attributes φυγοδέμνιος ("avoider of the nuptial bed", 4.177), ἀπειθής ("incredulous", 4.25) and ἀμείλιχος ("pitiless", 4.161) and later reversed by δυσίμερος ("tormented by love", 4.222), after she changed her mind. Finally, as a fellow voyager of Cadmus, Harmonia is three times described as λιπόπατρις ("leaving one's country", 4.41; 46.365, 422) and once as ὁμόπλοος ("the fellow sailor", 4.234).

23 *Dion.* 3.248–371.

24 *Dion.* 3.373–377, 409–444.

aspects of a due marriage include a bride price, a house for the newlyweds, and ties with the future husband's family. Cadmus does not at all fit her conventional image of a good match.[25] Only after Aphrodite disguised as Peisinoe, a girl from the neighborhood, convinces her daughter of the (un)apparent appeal of Cadmus, does Harmonia agree to leave Samothrace with him.

Harmonia's change of mind marks her transformation from a girl into a woman and from an individual protagonist into a personification of harmony. This shift is emphasized by the fact that Nonnus lets her speak twice in this episode to document her initial resistance and subsequent change of mind.[26] The decision to leave Samothrace marks her growing up to the role destined for her, to become—at Cadmus' side—a representation of harmony accessible to humans. After joining him "under the witnessing escort of the gods,"[27] she starts to merge with Cadmus—a process that culminates in the couple's spectacular wedding, lasts throughout their lifelong marriage and continues even beyond in their metamorphosis into serpents.

2 Human Harmony

The following narrative focuses on Cadmus and the tasks he must fulfill before the wedding can finally take place. Nonnus portrays him as a warrior and propagator of civilization who follows the path assigned to him by gods. From his first appearance in the epic as an aimless wanderer, he grows to the role of a hero through his achievements; they include: the propagation of civilization in Greece, namely, alphabet, writing, astronomy, and mysteries; the fight with Ares' dragon and the Spartoi; the fight with the local peoples of Boeotia; and finally, the foundation of Thebes.[28] Nonnus later complements this list with Cadmus' adventures in Libya, an episode during the couple's seafaring after leaving Samothrace.[29]

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25 Harmonia regards marriage between family members, like between Zeus and Hera, as most desirable and would prefer to marry her foster brother, Emathion. For an exact account, see *Dion.* 4.28–63.

26 For Harmonia's two speeches, see *Dion.* 4.36–63 and 4.182–196. Although Harmonia is frequently mentioned in the epic, these two passages are the only examples of her direct speech.

27 *Dion.* 4.207.

28 For Cadmus' battle with Ares' dragon and the Spartoi, see *Dion.* 4.365–463. For Cadmus' fights with the Boeotians, see 5.35–49. For Cadmus' foundation of Thebes, see 5.49–87.

29 *Dion.* 13.335–363.

Harmonia barely plays a role in all these adventures. After the couple's departure from Samothrace and before their wedding in Thebes, her presence at Cadmus' side is mentioned only once.[30] She almost disappears from the scene and does not seem to be an active character anymore, like Medea for Jason.[31] Nevertheless, Harmonia's presence is necessary for Cadmus' success and as patron for his achievements. Her name resounds as an abstract notion at the beginning of the list of Cadmus' contributions to Greece.[32] In the Libyan episode, it is explicitly her beauty that provokes Cadmus' fighting.[33] One could argue that, although present only in the words of Zeus' promise, she already supported Cadmus' musical performance in the Typhon episode—a task that corresponds nicely with the association of her name with music.[34]

The Libyan episode is woven into the action of the *Dionysiaca* as a digression within the catalog of warriors joining Dionysus' campaign against the Indians. Although narrated later in the epic, chronologically it precedes the Theban wedding. In this account, Cadmus proves himself in heroic fights with the local warriors and wins the heart of his fiancée.[35] In the presence and under the participation of various divinities,[36] they lie by the Libyan lake Tritonis.[37] In several details, this love scene shows parallels to the earlier narrated and well-established account of the couple's marriage in Thebes.[38] Moreover, it inspires

30 *Dion.* 4.286 σὺν Ἁρμονίῃ δὲ κομίζων.

31 Nonnus' presentation of Cadmus and Harmonia in many ways corresponds with the adventures of Jason and Medea, as narrated in Apollonius; see Chuvin 1976, 43–44; Rocchi, 1989, 22–23, 33, 133; Carvounis 2014, 25–33. However, unlike this mythological couple, Cadmus and Harmonia repeatedly enjoy divine consent and grow to represent the ideal of a married couple.

32 *Dion.* 4.259–262 Αὐτὰρ ὁ πάσῃ / Ἑλλάδι φωνήεντα καὶ ἔμφρονα δῶρα κομίζων / γλώσσης ὄργανα τεῦξεν ὁμόθροα συμφυέος δὲ / ἁρμονίης στοιχηδὸν ἐς ἄζυγα σύζυγα μίξας ("But Cadmus brought gifts of voice and thought for all Hellas; he fashioned tools to echo the sounds of the tongue, he mingled sonant and consonant in one order of connected harmony"). The list of contributions follows until 4.284. The term ἁρμονία refers in this passage to an adequate, meaningful combination of vowels and consonants. On the connection between alphabet and harmony, see Schneider 1960, 144–146; Dornseiff 1925^{2}, 11–14 and 82 f.; Schavernoch 1981, 232 n. 197.

33 *Dion.* 13.337–338 ἧς διὰ μορφήν / γείτονας ἀντιβίους πολεμητόκος ὥπλισε Φήμη ("[t]he rumour of her beauty bred war and armed hostile neighbours").

34 *Dion.* 1.409–2.22. Nonnus uses the expression ἁρμονίην δ᾽ ἀνέκοψεν ([the reed] cut off the tune, 2.22) to denote the end of Cadmus' performance.

35 *Dion.* 13.337–350.

36 Nonnus mentions the nymphs Hesperides (*Dion.* 13.351), Cypris (13.352), Erotes (13.352), and Atlas (13.361).

37 *Dion.* 13.349–350. The lake is mentioned also in Pind. *P.* 4.20 and Hdt. 4.178.

38 In this love scene, Nonnus frequently uses wedding vocabulary, e.g., 13.337 Ἁρμονίην ἔτι

Cadmus to found "a hundred cities" with "lofty walls inaccessible and towers made of stone," an accomplishment that rivals even his foundation of Thebes.[39] Seen in the context of the catalog of troops joining Dionysus' campaign against the Indians, in which this episode is entwined, it appears that the presence of Cadmus and Harmonia in Libya anticipates Dionysus' role as a propagator of civilization.[40]

The foundation of Thebes, elaborately described in book 5 of the epic, is Cadmus' crowning achievement: it is the last command of Apollo's oracle in Delphi and the last condition for the couple's wedding.[41] In Nonnus' account, the foundation of Thebes appears as the ultimate tribute paid by Cadmus to his future wife. It is Olympus, Harmonia's due celestial residence, that serves as a model for Thebes and makes it a fitting surrounding for the bride's celestial relatives who attend the celebration of the couple's nuptials.[42] In Nonnus' description, Olympus is meant to represent the whole universe. Thus, the city of Thebes—surrounded by its seven gates—reflects the geocentric model of the seven-zoned universe as imagined in the Pythagorean concept of the harmony of the spheres.[43] According to this notion, seven heavenly bodies, known in antiquity as seven planets—moon, sun, and five planets—encircle the Earth in the proportionate distance and create heavenly music, which resounds across the whole universe without being perceptible to the human ear.[44]

παρθένον; 352 εὔγαμον εὐνήν; 354 νύμφης ἕδνον; 355 παρὰ παστῷ; 357 ἀντὶ ῥόδου γαμίοιο; 357 νύμφη; 363 ζυγίης φιλότητος ἑῆς … νύμφης. Libya as the setting for the love scene between Cadmus and Harmonia is known only in Nonnus' account and possibly refers to local, Berberic, traditions; see Vian 1974, 110; on this episode, see also Vian 1963, 62; Chuvin 1991, 77–80.

39 See *Dion.* 13.363–366.

40 For Cadmus as precursor of Dionysus, cf. Bannert 2008, 48–49; Aringer 2012, 91–92.

41 *Dion.* 4.303–306.

42 *Dion.* 5.63–67, 85–87, 119.

43 For the Theban gates, see *Dion.* 5.67–84. The names of the gates correspond to the seven "planets" in the following order: Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn. Sometimes they were complemented by an eighth sphere of the fixed stars, cf. Cic. *Rep.* 6.17 (*Somnium Scipionis*). In the *Corpus Hermeticum* the seven ζῶναι of the harmony are complemented by two more φύσεις, see *CH* 1.24–26 (Poimandres). Nonnus refers to the concept of the seven-zoned universe throughout his epic, see *Dion.* 1.241; 2.171; 3.430, 350; 5.65; 6.249; 8.53; 25.396; 30.12; 38.115, 312, 381, 386; 40.250; 41.346; 45.333; 46.67; 47.659.

44 The concept of the harmony of the spheres originates from the observation that musical intervals correspond to mathematical proportions that are also manifest in astronomy. It was attributed to Pythagoras (cf. Plin. *Nat.* 2.17.20) and discussed throughout antiquity, most notably by Plato (esp. *Rep.* 10.614b–621d). Aristotle was an opponent of this theory (*Cael.* 2.9). Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* (*Rep.* 6.9–29) and Macrobius' Neoplatonic commentary popularized it in Latin antiquity. For the discussion and evolution of this concept,

3 Divine Harmony

The wedding of Cadmus and Harmonia is the *grand finale* of a narrative that started with Cadmus' contribution to the restoration of the harmony of the universe in the Typhon episode.[45] It is presented as the culmination of the couple's journey after leaving Samothrace, especially of Cadmus' fight with the dragon and the foundation of Thebes. During the wedding, the earthly city of Thebes resounds with heavenly music produced by the Olympian guests and vibrates in time to their dance movements. Nonnus provides a detailed description of seven musical performances by the wedding guests[46] and lists eight gifts bestowed to the bridal couple.[47]

The wedding community appears as an extraordinary, polyphonic orchestra of dancers and musicians playing instruments and performing styles that through their diversity reveal different aspects of the concept of the harmony of the spheres. The musical instruments, songs, and styles chosen by the individual guests correspond to their character and role during the wedding. By the means of ποικιλία, Nonnus plays with various representations of the harmony of the universe of which Thebes is an earthly and multifaceted image.[48]

Aphrodite, for example, is given the special task of decorating the bridal chamber for the newlyweds.[49] This activity, expressed by the verb κοσμεῖν, has the same root as κόσμος, the universe, and therefore links the wedding scene to the harmony of the well-ordered universe.[50] Cadmus' powerful musical performance in the Typhon episode[51] is echoed during the wedding celebration

see Waerden 1979, 100–115; Schavernoch 1981; Godwin 1987, 1993; James 1993. For representations in iconography, see Meyer-Baer, 1970, 2–216.

45 This association is established by Zeus in *Dion.* 1.396–397 and repeated after his victory over Typhon in 2.660–665.

46 For music and dance contributed by the divine guests to the wedding, see *Dion.* 5.88–112: a marriage hymn repeating the bride's name and a dance (Aonian girls); a wedding song (Aphrodite); a dance and a wedding melody on a salpinx (Ares); a syrinx melody (Erotes); a dance and a kithara melody (Apollo); a melody on different string instruments and a pantomime performance (the nine Muses); a song celebrating Cadmus and a circular dance (Nike).

47 The gifts offered to Cadmus and Harmonia are: "success in all things" (Zeus); "gifts of the sea" (Poseidon); a scepter (Hermes); a spear (Ares); a bow (Apollo); a crown with chatoyant stones (Hephaestus); a jeweled throne (Hera); and a necklace wrought by Hephaestus (Aphrodite). See *Dion.* 5.127–189.

48 *Dion.* 5.87 ποικίλον … χθόνιον τύπον ἶσον Ὀλύμπῳ.

49 *Dion.* 5.91.

50 Cf. esp. *Dion.* 1.140–145.

51 In the Typhon episode, Cadmus plays the syrinx twice (*Dion.* 1.409–420 and 516–534).

by melodies performed on syrinx and kithara, instruments that represent the concept of the harmony of the spheres.[52] Further allusions to this concept can be noticed in the performance of the nine Muses.[53] Nonnus also emphasizes the circular motion of Nike's dance, which appears as an additional link to the circular motion of the celestial bodies in the universe.[54]

Allusions to the concept of the harmony of the spheres can also be found in the love union of Cadmus and Harmonia in Libya.[55] In this scene, Atlas' play on the constellation Lyra, described as ἀστραίη Κιθάρη,[56] resonates with the Typhon episode in which this constellation is described as οὐρανίη Φόρμιγξ.[57] By describing Atlas' song and dance performance in which the whole heavens take part, Nonnus illustrates the circular revolution of the spheres.[58]

The wedding in Thebes and the love scene in Libya represent the ultimate union of Cadmus and Harmonia. In the Libyan episode, this union is expressed in the form of a sensual love scene in which nature, gods, and the universe take part. During the wedding scene, their union additionally attains a legal and social dimension. In both episodes, Nonnus combines two aspects of har-

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Typhon, who is spellbound by Cadmus' first performance, eagerly hands the sinews of Zeus to Cadmus, who pretends to need them to perform a victory ode on the kithara in praise of Typhon (1.486–512). However, Cadmus gives the sinews back to Zeus and plays instead another syrinx melody to Typhon, who is spellbound again and does not notice the deception even during Cadmus' performance (1.521–2.19). See also Hardie 2005.

52 For syrinx and kithara as instruments representing the harmony of the spheres, see Serv. On Verg. *Buc.* 5.66; *Orph. H.* 8.9 and 11; 11.6; 34.16–23. See also Schavernoch 1981, 26–27, 221 n. 30 and 34; Ricciardelii 2000, 281–282 *ad* 11.6, 371–372 *ad* 34.16–23; Fayant 2014, 85 *ad* 8.9 and 8.11, 301–302 *ad* 34.16–23.

53 For the connection between the Muses and the harmony of the spheres, see Boyancé 1946.

54 See *Dion.* 5.111–112. Nike's contribution during the wedding recalls also her own role in the Typhon episode, in which she encouraged Zeus to fight against Typhon (2.205–236) and was his ally during the battle (2.358–363; 418–420). After Zeus' victory she led his chariot (2.701–702) and celebrated his triumph (2.709).

55 *Dion.* 13.349–363.

56 *Dion.* 13.359. This love scene is also musically accompanied by a choral song of the Hesperides.

57 First, Typhon, Γίγας φιλάοιδος (*Dion.* 1.415), plans to transfer Cadmus' syrinx on the sky and place it nearby Lyra as a rival constellation (1.465–467). Later, Zeus promises Cadmus that the Lyra will resound on his wedding day as an honor and reminiscence of the hero's play on the syrinx that rescued the whole universe (2.663–664). Cf. Vian 1976, 190 *ad* 2.664.

58 *Dion.* 13.359–362 καὶ μέλος ἀστραίης Κιθάρης ἐπὶ κῶμον ἐγείρας / μητροπάτωρ σφαιρηδὸν ἑῷ βητάρμονι ταρσῷ / οὐρανὸν ἀμφελέλιζε Λίβυς κυρτούμενος Ἄτλας, / καὶ μέλος ἁρμονίης ἐμελίζετο γείτονι φωνῇ ("Her mother's father the stooping Libyan Atlas awoke a tune of the heavenly harp to join the revels, and with tripping foot he twirled the heavens round like a ball, while he sang a stave of harmony himself not far away").

mony in the description of the couple's union: one is the eternal structure of the harmony of the universe; the other is the temporary harmony of musical performances.

The relationship between Cadmus and Harmonia is the result of an agreement between Zeus and Cadmus made in the Typhon episode. At Cadmus' side, Harmonia becomes a representation of harmony and a precious gift he can now deliver to earth. Thanks to Harmonia, Cadmus succeeds in his mission of civilizing the earth and appears not only as a recipient of the divine gift but also as a mediator between the Olympians and the humans, heaven and earth. In the celebration of their union, the couple is rewarded with a visit to a realm of heavenly harmony, a realm usually inaccessible to people. The gods contribute to the celebrations with music, dance, happiness, and peace. At Harmonia's side, Cadmus becomes not only "savior of the cosmic harmony,"[59] but also experiences this harmony on the day of their wedding. It is the heavenly realm of harmony, which, in the epic, is yet to be presented in the description of the palace of Allmother Harmonia.

4 Allmother Harmonia

The culmination of the concept of harmony is a scene in the palace of Allmother Harmonia in book 41 of the *Dionysiaca*.[60] This Harmonia, a mighty divinity, is the second and ultimate personification of harmony, and her appearance has already been anticipated in earlier episodes of the epic.[61] Unlike Lady Harmonia, Allmother Harmonia represents stability and eternity in every aspect of her being. As a guardian of primordial tablets, she is also a symbol of wisdom and reconciliation. Her palace, her outward appearance, and her actions are all characterized by eternal and unchanging principles. Nonnus presents her as indispensable for gods, humans, and the entire universe alike. She embodies the ideal state of the well-ordered system of the universe, a model that is aspired to by communities on earth through the establishment of laws and rules.

59 *Dion.* 1.397.

60 For this episode, see *Dion.* 41.275–400.

61 Harmonia's palace is mentioned in *Dion.* 7.109 as the destination of Aion after his supplication to Zeus. In 8.161 Hera names the home of Harmonia and Ophion as her last resort in case her place in Olympus is taken by Semele. In 12.1–116 Harmonia's tablets are situated in the palace of Helios and inspected there by the Seasons.

Allmother Harmonia is introduced to the readers within the framework of an extensive digression on Dionysus' unsuccessful rivalry with Poseidon for Beroe, the daughter of Adonis and Aphrodite.[62] This digression is narrated in books 41–43 at a half-way point of Dionysus' journey to Olympus, after his ultimate victory in the Indian War and after he was first welcomed as an equal deity by Heracles Helios Astrochiton.[63]

In the scene at the palace of Allmother Harmonia, Aphrodite pays her a visit to learn about the future of the city Berytus, named after Beroe.[64] Aphrodite's entering the palace of Harmonia pauses the action of the *Dionysiaca* and invites the audience to a realm in which time and plot are irrelevant. It is a domain of eternity and constant values, in which events are represented on tablets and therefore are timeless. This complex digression manifests the existence of a parallel world in the epic.

The description of Allmother Harmonia's palace is entwined with the praise of the city of Berytus as a seat of laws. By this position, Nonnus elevates his praise of peace and justice on earth into an imagination of its cosmic prototype. He presents Harmonia's palace as a temple of ideals like wisdom, peace, justice, stability, and cosmic order that correspond with the earthly aspirations of Berytus. Thus, the notion of harmony is here introduced as an omnipresent notion, both in the earthly and cosmic dimensions.

The palace of Allmother Harmonia is situated far from where other divinities live.[65] In its characterization, Nonnus pays attention to its ideal dimensions, symmetry, and connection with the numbers four and seven. The palace is round in form, self-built, and reflects the universe with its four quarters.[66] Its four portals stand fast against the four winds they are named after. The interior of the palace is inhabited by seven female personifications.[67] Four allotted

62 *Dion.* 41.155–157. As a daughter of Aphrodite and Adonis, Beroe is a half-sister of Lady Harmonia. In an alternate version (41.150–154), Beroe, called also Amymone, is a daughter of Tethys and Oceanus.

63 For the end of the Indian War, see *Dion.* 40.96–100; for Dionysus received as an equal deity, see 40.411–421.

64 For the identification of Berytus with Beirut, see Chuvin 1991, 196–221.

65 Aphrodite must traverse the vault of the universe to reach it, cf. *Dion.* 41.276 ἠερίην ἁψῖδα διερροίζησε πεδίλῳ. Verb διαρροιζέω is a hapax in Nonnus and otherwise represented only once in Sophocl. *Trach.* 568 to describe the motion of an arrow.

66 See *Dion.* 41.278–281.

67 In other passages of the epic, Nonnus also links several male deities to the palace of Allmother Harmonia: Ophion (*Dion.* 8.160–161), Aion (7.108–109); cf. also analogies between the palace of Harmonia (41.275–400), the palace of Helios (12.1–117) and the palace of Astraios (6.15–122); cf. also Nonnus' description of Heracles Helios Astrochiton (40.411–417), who wears "a patterned robe like the sky, and image of the universe" (40.416). Har-

maids, named after the cardinal points, stand at the gates of the palace: the maid Antolie at the gate of Euros, the maid Dysis at the gate of Zephyrus, the maid Mesembrias at the gate of Notus, and the maid Arktos at the gate of Boreas. Besides the maids, Nonnus names two servants with telling names: Astynomeia and Eurynome. The seventh inhabitant of the palace is Allmother Harmonia.

Harmonia seems never to leave her exceptional residence in which she is occupied with an honorable, womanly activity: weaving.[68] This occupation illustrates her role of a supporter and restorer of the κόσμος, as the pattern she is working on is a circular image of the geocentric universe and complements Nonnus' depiction of her palace. The fabric presents in its middle an elaborate picture of the earth with representations of green rivers with human faces and bull's horns. The earth, which is portrayed in a state of union with the sea, is surrounded by the starry sky. The same picture is enclosed by the illustration of Oceanus, flowing around the whole universe. Thus, in this *ekphrasis*, Nonnus depicts Allmother Harmonia's responsibility to preserve the harmony of the universe.

Allmother Harmonia is consistently presented as mature and changeless. Nonnus describes her as "coexistent with the universe" to emphasize her wisdom and agelessness rather than seniority,[69] as she appears energetic when hurrying to pay Aphrodite due respect as host.[70] Nonnus presents her as an "Allmother" to accentuate her kind-hearted, protective and all-embracing attitude.[71] This attribute refers also to her life-giving role in the universe as essential for every form of being, gods and humans alike, and corresponds with four other epithets by which Nonnus concludes her portrayal: "nurse of the world,"[72]

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monia's association with these divinities underlines her status in the hierarchy of gods. They all represent cosmic deities and embody the ongoing eternal character of the universe. See also Vian 1993 and Miguélez-Cavero 2013, 352–359.

68 For the description of Harmonia's weaving, see *Dion.* 41.295–302. This scene has various inspirations that enrich its meaning in the epic. The shield of Achilles (Hom. *Il.* 18.478–608) presents a similar scene. In Claud. *Rapt. Pros.* 1.269–272 Proserpina, who weaves a model of the universe, is observed by Diana and Minerva. Interestingly, in Nonnus' description of Persephone's weaving in book 5, the subject is unknown. See also Kröll 2011. Harmonia's guest, Aphrodite, was not a good weaver, cf. 24.240–329.

69 *Dion.* 41.319 σύγχρονος ἥλικι κόσμῳ, cf. a similar expression about Eros in 33.109 βιοσσόε σύγχρονε κόσμου.

70 *Dion.* 41.303–310.

71 *Dion.* 41.277 παμμήτωρ, elsewhere in the *Dionysiaca* it refers only to earth and female divinities, cf. Gaea 48.7, κόλπος χθόνος 13.36, 41.92, Rhea 9.222, 13.36, 25.354, Hera 8.162, Deo 19.83.

72 *Dion.* 41.314 πάντροφος, it refers also to Aion 6.372, Mene (Selene) 44.191, and Tethys 23.285.

"nourisher of life,"[73] "nurse of immortals,"[74] and "savior of life."[75] Harmonia's epithets link her to a spectrum of munificent pre-Olympian divinities in the epic, including Aion.[76]

In her behavior, Allmother Harmonia follows reason, not emotions, and embodies true harmony of temper. She proves the highest standards as host due to her elegance, respectful manners, and social skills. She is capable of recognizing the inner sorrows of her guest from their outer appearance.[77] The visit at Allmother Harmonia's palace leaves her guest Aphrodite happy, calmed, and able to care for her domain again.[78]

5 The Tablets of Harmonia

Harmonia's main function in the *Dionysiaca* is to protect tablets that contain the primordial oracles of Ophion, which relate the unfolding history of the world.[79] Because of this role, she is associated with wisdom and guarantees the stability of the universe.[80] The seven tablets are named after the seven celestial bodies encircling Earth in the geocentric model of the universe.

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73 *Dion.* 41.318 βιότοιο τιθήνη, it refers also to Beroe 41.396, 42.464, Ino 5.559, Macris 21.194, Astraia 41.213, Eris 20.35, Rhea 9.154, Echelaos 32.210.

74 *Dion.* 41.319 τρόφος ἀθανάτων. It refers also to Aion 38.90, Dike 3.196, Rhea 9.222, 10.293. Cf. also the description τροφὸς ἀνδρῶν (41.334) of the Virgin of the Stars (Παρθένος ἀστερόεσσα), who sent Aphrodite to Harmonia.

75 *Dion.* 41.333 βιοσσόος. It refers also to αὐλὸς Ἐρώτων 24.217, αὔρη in Berytus 41.20, γάμος 11.277, Hermes 4.31, Eros 33.109, ἦπαρ 4.362, μέλος 5.103, Aristaios 5.219, φάρμακον 7.56.

76 After his supplication to Zeus for mankind (*Dion.* 7.7–109), Aion departs to Allmother Harmonia's palace (7.108–109). Nonnus does not specify the character of their relationship and Allmother Harmonia's potential role in Aion's intervention. For Aion's supplication, see Spanoudakis 2012.

77 For Allmother Harmonia's behavior, see *Dion.* 41.303–314.

78 Aphrodite's visit reflects ties by which the two divinities are bound in the *Dionysiaca*. In Harmonia's greeting of her guest (*Dion.* 41.315–317), Aphrodite is described as a profound power of the universe and the origin of all life.

79 In book 12, these tablets are referred to as κύρβεις Ἁρμονίης (*Dion.* 12.32) and kept in the palace of Helios; in book 41, they are called πίνακες (41.340) and kept in the palace of Allmother Harmonia. The author of the tablets is Ophion (41.351–352), in book 12 alternately Phanes and Ophion (cf. 12.33–35 versus 12.44–45).

80 The association of Allmother Harmonia with wisdom and knowledge shows similarities with a contemporary Latin representation of Harmonia in Martianus Capella's *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, in which she appears as the last of seven personifications of *artes liberales* (after Grammar, Dialectic, Rhetoric, Geometry, Arithmetic, and Astronomy). This demonstrates the growing significance of Harmonia as personification in both Greek and Latin Late Antiquity.

Both in their names and their content, the tablets of Allmother Harmonia are connected to the concept of the harmony of the spheres. The order of the tablets corresponds with the order of the seven "planets"—Selene (moon), Stilbon (Mercury), Aphrodite (Venus), Helios (sun), Pyroeis (Mars), Phaethon (Jupiter), Phainon (Saturn)—and recalls Nonnus' description of the seven gates of Thebes, where the marriage of Cadmus and Lady Harmonia took place.[81]

Nonnus relates three different prophecies that are engraved on the tablets of Harmonia. The first relates to the foundation of the city of Berytus, its name and location.[82] The second contains a list of ten inventions essential for the spreading of civilization, including the invention of musical instruments, mystic song, astronomy, eloquent speech, alphabet, law, and indissoluble marriage.[83] The third oracle praises the foundation of a law school in Berytus and the propagation of justice under the reign of Augustus.[84]

These three prophecies establish a link between the timeless and ideal realm of Allmother Harmonia and the events on earth. The inventions refer to different areas of expertise accessible to people and represent human achievements in civilization that reflect eternal divine prototypes. Moreover, they are affiliated with the notion of harmony and recall Cadmus' invention of the alphabet and his propagation of civilization in Greece. The areas of law and marriage law are particularly interesting here because in Late Antiquity, these fields were associated with the Greek and Roman personified deities of Homonoia and Concordia.[85] These two personifications embody an agreement in community and marriage, social concord and stability, and are associated with peace (εἰρήνη and *pax*, respectively).[86]

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81 See *Dion.* 41.342–350. For the names of the tablets and Nonnus' sources, see Chuvin and Fayant 2006, 168 *ad* 343–350.

82 *Dion.* 41.361–367. This prophecy is located on the seventh tablet (Saturn).

83 *Dion.* 41.368–384. This prophecy is located on the second tablet (Hermes). It includes the following inventions: (1–3) musical instruments (Pan's invention of the syrinx, Hermes' invention of the kithara, Hyagnis' invention of the double aulos); (4) Orpheus' invention of mystic song; (5) Linus' invention of eloquent speech; (6–7) astronomy (Arcas' invention of the twelve months and the sun's circuit, Endymion's invention of the three phases of the moon); (8) Cadmus' invention of the alphabet; (9) Solon's invention of laws; and (10) Cecrops' invention of indissoluble marriage.

84 *Dion.* 41.385–398. This prophecy is located on the middle tablet (Sun).

85 Harmony represents proportions that are mirrored in all these disciplines, cf. also Waerden 1979, 323–336. For the representation of Concordia and her connection with laws and marriage agreement, see Noreña 2011, 132–136.

86 See Jal 1961; Gray 2017, 67–68, 74–82. Interestingly, Nonnus' initial depiction of Allmother Harmonia sitting on a throne, guaranteeing peace and stability to the universe and paying

In the scene at Allmother Harmonia's palace, Nonnus seems to establish a connection to the Roman imperial ideology. The Latin term and personification of *concordia* developed from the Greek concept of ὁμόνοια;[87] Alexander the Great had used this term to encapsulate his approach to imperial rule.[88] Unsurprisingly, the concept of ὁμόνοια had a long afterlife in the Roman period. Although the term ὁμόνοια does not occur in the *Dionysiaca*, Nonnus several times applies the expression ὁμοφροσύνη that was also used to address this notion.[89] The inclusion of Roman tradition is even more apparent in Nonnus' description of two oracles that reveal the future of the city of Berytus.[90] It is to become a seat of law, justice, and peace under the Roman Empire, an outstanding example among earthly cities. The foundation of Berytus appears as an antidote to war, chaos, and destruction.

Aphrodite's examination of the oracles follows her appeal to goddess Harmonia: "Have a care then for Justice and grant harmony to the world!"[91] Harmonia's tablets, on which the foundation of Berytus and the ten inventions are represented, deliver an immediate response to Aphrodite's request. It is the city of Berytus and the propagation of law and civilization that ensure stability, peace, and justice on earth and guarantee an earthly representation of the divine harmony.[92]

due respect to Aphrodite (*Dion.* 41.38–39), recalls the visual representation of the personifications of Homonoia and Concordia; see Hölscher 1990 and Shapiro 1990.

87 For the term *concordia* and its relation to the Greek ὁμόνοια, see Akar 2013, 28–36. For the concept of ὁμόνοια, see Baldry 1965 and Moulakis 1973; for its relevance in the imperial times, see Sheppard 1984–1986 and Lobur 2008, 40.

88 See Mauriac 1949.

89 For ὁμοφροσύνη, see *Dion.* 39.202; 42.524 and 47.715; for ὁμοφρονέω, see 19.315; 22.100; 26.67; 40.180; 48.615; for ὁμόφρων, see 34.238 and 36.401. For the term ὁμοφροσύνη and its relation to *concordia*, see Akar 2013, 38–39.

90 In 41.396 Berytus is called βιότοιο γαληναίοιο τιθήνη ("the nurse of quiet life"), which corresponds to the epithet βιότοιο τιθήνη describing divine Harmonia in 41.318 and Beroe in 42.434. Berytus becomes "one city for all cities in the world" (μία πτόλις ἄστεα κόσμου, 41.398), because it is home to law and justice. Aphrodite later describes Berytus as "heaven on earth" (οὐρανὸν ἐν χθόνι πῆξω, 41.417) to motivate her son, Eros, to initiate the foundation of Berytus. Cf. also the oracle on the seventh tablet (Saturn) in 41.364–367. For Beroe's "mission for civilization," see Accorinti 1997, 360–364.

91 *Dion.* 41.332 Ἀλλὰ δίκης ἀλέγιζε καὶ ἁρμονίην πόρε κόσμῳ.

92 Interestingly, the cities of Thebes and Berytus are juxtaposed as two different images of the universe in the epic. Thebes appears to copy only the external characteristics of Olympus, while Berytus embodies through its law school the principles of just, stable, and peaceful governance.

6 Dionysian Harmony

In the framework of the epic, both personifications of Harmonia are relevant to understanding the role of the main protagonist, the god Dionysus, and his mission on earth until his final apotheosis. Cadmus and Harmonia are introduced not only as his grandparents but also as precursors of his achievements. Cadmus' successful battles and propagation of civilization foreshadow Dionysus' struggles and his propagation of wine among humans. Through the gift of the nectar-like wine, Dionysus distributes hope and joy and spreads the experience of the divine on earth.

However, Dionysus' battles also have a political dimension. He is called the "champion of Justice" and his victories ultimately bring peace and reconciliation.[93] In his conquests and adventures, as depicted by Nonnus, Dionysus also rivals Alexander the Great and his principle of governance, the ὁμόνοια.[94] Dionysus' mission appears then to be the propagation not only of civilization but also of peace and justice of a well-governed *oikumene*. This aspect of Dionysus' earthly mission corresponds with the role of the city of Berytus in the context of Allmother Harmonia's palace.

The term ἁρμονία is related to the god Dionysus through an illustration on his shield in book 25 of the epic. One of the scenes on Dionysus' shield depicts the resurrection of Tylus by a plant, described as Διὸς ἄνθος ("flower of Zeus").[95] In Nonnus' description, Tylus' corpse is filled again with life[96] and "the body recovered its rhythm" (ἁρμονίῃ πέλε μορφῇ).[97] Through its position on the shield of Dionysus, this resurrection scene seems vital for an understanding of the god's mission on earth and his distribution of wine, hope, and joy.

Nonnus portrays Dionysus as a benefactor of humanity who brings a new quality of life and hope for an eternal afterlife to humans. In the context of the epic, Nonnus links different aspects of the term ἁρμονία to the earthly mission of Dionysus: It is the joyful celebration of a community during the Dionysian festivities; it is the restoration of a peaceful *oikumene* after his victories; and it is the hope for resurrection for those who accept the new god.

93 See *Dion.* 48.98 Βάκχος ἵκανε Δίκης πρόμος; see also Vian 2003, 10–11.

94 On the affinities between Dionysus and Alexander see, e.g., Chuvin 1992, 73–74; Bowersock 1994, 156–157.

95 For the role of Dionysus' shield and the representation of the resurrection scene, see Spanoudakis 2013, 2014.

96 *Dion.* 25.543–552.

97 *Dion.* 24.551.

7 Conclusions

In his epic, Nonnus pays homage to harmony. On the one hand, he uses this term to describe an omnipresent structure that conditions the existence of the universe and humanity, individual and society. On the other hand, he depicts harmony as a constant principle that manifests itself in various fleeting forms without being tangible, like Proteus, the patron of the *Dionysiaca*. Harmony appears to be an inseparable part of ποκιλία, which without harmony would only be a multitude, a mass, or chaos. Moreover, harmony is frequently portrayed by seeming opposites. It is fleeting and indestructible at once like words in a speech, a chant or a melody played on a musical instrument. Once it is created, it disperses, but it can also be reconstituted. This kind of harmony seems to unite both gods and humans.

Nonnus presents harmony as a gift of the gods, received to be propagated. This harmony is personified by Lady Harmonia. After leaving Samothrace, she disappears as a character and merges with Cadmus to become his gift to the world: harmony. This harmony is represented in various disciplines (such as music, writing, astronomy, and law) and manifests itself in the achievements of civilization. As a gift, harmony appears to have an individual dimension and to shape character and relationships. It grants Cadmus a new identity and inspires him to take on challenges he would otherwise not dare.

For Nonnus, harmony seems to be a feature of every single entity in the κόσμος. It is vital for the life of every individual, it is essential for the lasting union of a couple, and it is indispensable for a peaceful living together in a society. This ideal of a lawful and just social coexistence is expressed in the scene at Allmother Harmonia's palace. Her celestial residence represents the well-governed universe and is the home of wisdom, justice, and peace. In her duties, Allmother Harmonia also embraces her Latin relative, Concordia, and the Greek concept of ὁμόνοια. Through her patronage of law, stability, and government, she also inspires political entities, such as the Roman Empire and the empire of Alexander the Great, both of which have resonances with the empire of Dionysus. Through civilization, protagonists such as Cadmus and Dionysus seek to propagate the virtues of this heavenly model on earth.

Nonnus chooses to present the notion of harmony with two personifications and stages their appearances in the epic in contrast to each other. Lady Harmonia personifies the state of harmony accessible to humans, in contrast to Allmother Harmonia, the personification of ideal harmony, to which earthly protagonists can only aspire. The two Harmoniai are distinct protagonists but only apparent opposites. Nonnus uses them to represent complementary aspects of

the complex notion of harmony—one as a heavenly model, the other one as its human embodiment.

Being an epic poem in forty-eight books, the *Dionysiaca* aspires to represent harmony in its inner structure, verse rhythm, and word melody. This frame, like a bodily shape, is filled by its author with life, a narrative ποκιλία of fleeting scenes and episodes. It is, perhaps, this inner harmony that has granted the epic a survival until today, to be (re)discovered as a gift and enjoyed. As Constantine Cavafy noted in his poem, written around a century ago:

> Προχθές τοῦ Νόννου στίχους ἐδιαβάζαμε.
> Τί εἰκόνες, τί ρυθμός, τί γλῶσσα, τί ἁρμονία.
> Ἐνθουσιασμένοι τόν Πανοπολίτην ἐθαυμάζαμε.[98]
>
> The other day we read some lines by Nonnos:
> what imagery, what diction, what rhythm and harmony!
> All enthusiasm, how we admired the Panopolitan.

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98 Κωνσταντίνος Καβάφης, *Φυγάδες* [1914]. English translation by Edmund Keeley/Philip Sherrard (*Exiles*).

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CHAPTER 11

The Awakening of Ariadne in Nonnus: A Deliberate Metaphor

David Hernández de la Fuente

Der junge Bacchus kam mit heiligem
Weine vom Schlafe die Völker weckend.
FRIEDRICH HÖLDERLIN, *An unsere Dichter*

With these lines, Hölderlin pictures Dionysus as the god who "comes to awake those sleeping." Undoubtedly, the model of Dionysian awakening is, above all, that of Ariadne on Naxos, rescued by Bacchus after having been abandoned by Theseus. My aim in the present chapter is to analyze the motif of Ariadne's awakening in the poetry of Nonnus of Panopolis. I shall start with a necessary short historical introduction on the reception of this motif in the visual arts in antiquity, which I deem extremely important in the case of a poet like Nonnus who put so much emphasis on visual aspects. Next, I will examine the Nonnian episode (*Dion*. 47.265–471) and argue that it serves as a metaphor of the union with a god, or hierogamy, with its metaphysical and salvific implications. This metaphor is based on the interpretation of Dionysus as the god who comes to wake human beings to real life; an interpretation that was already present in ancient mysteries, but that was particularly underlined in his comparison with Christ.

In Nonnus, the metaphor used for those who awake from sleep or death thanks to Dionysus is present in several examples. Moreover, in other examples it is the god himself who provokes sleepiness with the help of wine. These episodes, however, are also marked by hierogamy and a sort of new knowledge provided by the god. Not only young maidens such as Nicaea, Aura, and Pallene seem to enjoy a sensual dream and a brusque awakening to a new phase of their lives carrying a divine seed, but also other mythical characters, such as Tylus or Ampelus, experience a curious awakening to a renewed life. Some interesting parallels with Nonnus' *Paraphrase* are worth mentioning, the most

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obvious being the episode of Lazarus.[1] Thus, references to sleeping and awakening become very productive metaphors in Nonnus, ultimately exemplified in Ariadne's awakening. This chapter, therefore, would attempt to offer, on the one hand, a comprehensive interpretation of the leitmotif of the awakening of Ariadne, with a particular focus on its ideological context and representation in the visual arts, and, on the other hand, it will also offer a specific examination of its role within Nonnus' literary project.

1 The Dream and Awakening of Ariadne

The dream and the awakening of Ariadne represent important episodes in Dionysian art and literature. In its philosophical interpretation, already from antiquity onwards, Dionysus is often characterized as the god who comes to awake those sleeping; to grant them an experience beyond the ordinary; to open their eyes through his mysteries to a real life beyond their ordinary everyday life.[2] Undeniably, few other mythical episodes in Classical literature would become more symbolic for the idea of the awakening to a new life than Ariadne's encounter with Dionysus. Ariadne is abandoned by her "human partner," Theseus, and rescued or redeemed by her hierogamy with her "divine partner": both motifs are deeply rooted in popular narratives.[3] However, the fact that sleeping is equated with death and awakening with resurrection is common and, as a recurrent folklore motif within the framework of resurrection, it is included in Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, among other examples, as "Death thought sleep" (E175). The moment of the magical awakening to a new life in Ariadne's myth is the culminating moment in the narrative studied by Propp within the model frame "initial disgrace or loss is solved,"[4] as "a dead person is brought back to life" (K9). Together with her role as a helper, this is the other mythologeme or mytheme—following either the Jungian or structural-

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1 This episode has been discussed in detail by Spanoudakis 2014 in his edition of chapter XI of the *Paraphrase*.

2 Thus, particularly in Plato and Neoplatonic philosophers, but already since Metrodorus of Lampsacus, Dionysus is a symbol of generation or spiritual afterlife, referring to the intelligible world or to the connection with metaphysical realities, cf. Wildberg 2011; Mariño Sánchez 2014, 306, 331–341.

3 Cf. several categories of Thompson's Index 1955–1958 which could be applied: some related to Ariadne's former journey ("Girl as helper" N831, "Ariadne-thread" R121.5), and others to her salvific union with Dionysus ("God enamored of mortal" T91.3.3, "Marriage of a mortal and a god" T111.1).

4 Propp 1968, 53.

FIGURE 11.1
South Italian *stamnos* of the so-called painter of Ariadne c. 400–390 BC. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts

ist terminology—in the legend of Ariadne. This moment could be called the invariable part of the myth: her symbolic death, through sleeping and awakening, which could eventually end up in a transition to the netherworld, either in an apotheosis, *katasterismos*, divinization or transit to Hades. This would eventually become a fundamental element in the myth and the cult of Ariadne in ancient Greece.[5]

In the transition to a happy life in the netherworld, after joining the divine element, the deceased females have traditionally been assimilated to Ariadne's experience, a divinized mortal bride. Undoubtedly, her awakening is the key moment of this story, which has very often been represented in the visual arts from antiquity until now. A sleeping Ariadne is thus represented in certain ceramic funerary pieces from the south of Italy (Fig. 11.1),[6] in a Pompeian fresco in the Casa dei Capitelli Colorati (National Archaeological Museum in Naples), in the Villa Arianna de Castellammare di Stabia, or in a well-known statue of the Vatican Museums (Figs. 11.2–4). Undoubtedly, the sleeping Ariadne of the Vatican Museums, formerly interpreted as Cleopatra, has proven to be most influential as a model for this subgenre in art history.[7]

The analysis of the iconography depicting mythical scenes of dreams and their symbolism in Greek and Roman art allows us to establish an interesting typology. According to Sheila McNally,[8] there are three different types of representations in which the figure of a dreaming figure becomes especially relevant. This group of images would include not only those representing Ariadne, but also those representing other sleeping heroes such as Endymion, the beloved of Selene. First, the dream is portrayed in ancient depictions of mythological scenes as an experience that reduces the sleeping person to the category of an object: For example, in the images of Alkyoneus and in the earliest images of

5 See chapter 3 of Hernández de la Fuente 2017.
6 Kerényi 1998, ill. 125, 126, 127, 129; or Sciarra 1960.
7 A summary of the question in Elvira Barba 2010.
8 McNally 1985.

FIGURE 11.2
Fresco portraying Dionysus and Ariadne. Villa Arianna. First century. Castellammare di Stabia

FIGURE 11.3
Dionysus rescues Ariadne in Naxos. Pompeian fresco from the first century. Casa dei Capitelli Colorati. National Archaeological Museum, Naples. Inv. 9278

FIGURE 11.4
Sleeping Ariadne. Roman copy from the second century of a Greek Hellenistic original. Vatican Museums, Inv. 548

sleeping maenads and of Ariadne herself in Greek ceramics. Second, there is another type of images where sleep is a consequence of physical exertion and even though it might suggest at first sight just a figure at rest, it actually suggest to the viewer that the figure's total extenuation is due to his or her actions in his or her immediate past. Finally, there is a third type of representation, the most interesting to us, in which the so-called "dream of transformation," to use the term coined by McNally, is depicted.[9] This dream, which metamorphoses those sleeping, urges the dreamer to establish new relations with others or with themselves. It is sometimes caused by intoxication but, as in the case of weakness, it often does not require any explanation of how the figure came to be asleep. McNally further subdivides the iconography of this transformation dream into two different categories according to the causes for this transformation: internal or external.

Internal transformation happens in the dreams of satyrs or in the famous Vatican Ariadne, where the figures are alone laying asleep; while the dream of Endymion and of Ariadne in the Campania frescoes, such as the above-mentioned examples of Stabia and Pompeii (figs. 11.2 and 11.3), clearly belong to the second type. In these examples, other figures such as Dionysus or Selene appear to the sleeping figures. These images of external transformation are abundant in villas between AD 40 and AD 70, not only as evocations of sensual pleasures, but also as representations of the union between human and divine elements. In addition, they could also symbolize the moment when the dreamer enters into the community of the blessed. Therefore, the most interesting conclusion is that the ancients did not envisage this external transformation as a comfortable moment, but rather as challenge and expectation that, in the case of Ariadne, is explicitly portrayed in the ambivalence granted to the exit of her soul from her body: the dream takes her both to death and divinization.

It should be remembered that the artistic model of Ariadne sleeping or about to be awakened had great influence in the history of classical art. The representation that might have contributed the most to the development of the iconography of the sleeping nymph in the Renaissance and the Baroque deserves special attention because it was inspired by the Ariadne of antiquity and it was frequently represented in sculptures, reliefs, and paintings. This representation can be found in an engraving under the Greek heading of *panton tokadi* ("to the ancestor of all things") in the famous and fascinating incunabulum *Hypnerotomachia Polyphili* (1499) written by Francesco Colonna, and pub-

9 McNally 1985, 191–192.

FIGURE 11.5
Sleeping Ariadne. Engraving *panton tokadi* in F. Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Polyphili*. Aldo Manuzio, Venice, 1499

lished by Aldo Manuzio in Venice (Fig. 11.5).[10] From that moment onward the history of the iconology of the sleeping Ariadne in Western art is long,[11] and goes certainly beyond the aim of this chapter.

In general, the figure of the sleeping Ariadne suggests the expectation of a visit and, when Dionysus appears in the view, the tension between both figures is always present. On the relation between seeing and being seen, an almost *voyeuristic* dynamic foretelling the fabulous hierogamy, we could quote the dithyramb that Nietzsche dedicated to the episode:

> Darniedergeblitzt von dir,
> du höhnisch Auge, das mich aus Dunklem anblickt!
> So liege ich,
> biege mich, winde mich, gequält

10 MacDougall 1975, 358–361 identifies two possible origin myths for this story, Amymone's and Ariadne's.

11 From Velázquez to Giorgio de Chirico, Ariadne's dream is a recurrent leitmotif in European art history. Hardly has any artist been as obsessed with the topic of Ariadne, with the possible exception of Nietzsche, as De Chirico, who painted Ariadne's sleep over a hundred times. Cf. Taylor 2002.

FIGURE 11.6
Dionysus and Ariadne. Roman mosaic at the Archaeological Museum of Chania (Crete)

von allen ewigen Martern,
getroffen
von dir, grausamster Jäger,
du unbekannter—Gott …

Struck down by your lightning-bolt,
you mocking eye that stares at me from the darkness!
Thus I lie,
bend myself, twist myself, tortured
by every eternal torment,
smitten
by you, cruel huntsman,
you unknown—god …[12]

There are few other descriptions that are so explicit about the power of a god's sight and what it can do to a mortal's soul, and that can make clear the reverential terror before the epiphany. Dionysus' divine *voyeurism* frightens Ariadne in this case, not because of its sexual undertones, but rather because of its mystic implications. The former was gladly underlined in Roman mosaics portraying Ariadne's awakening, located in houses, particularly in their common areas (Fig. 11.6). Moreover, the allusions to the netherworld in Greek vases used for nuptial, symposium, or funerary contexts, or in the many sarcophagi depicting Ariadne's theme across the Roman world, attest to its relevance for the mystical ideas on the voyage of the soul.

The deep symbolism of Ariadne's dream, often overlooked by scholars in their approaches to this mythic figure, therefore should not be underestimated. The depths of this symbolism are masterly suggested by Richard Strauss in his opera *Ariadne auf Naxos* (1912), with libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, in

12 English translation Hollingdale 1984.

which the dream is described as a magic conjunction of suffering and hope in the unconscious wait of the abandoned young Cretan maiden: "Is she sleeping?" ask a Naiad and Dryad. "No, she is crying," replies the Naiad. "She is crying in her sleep: listen, she is weeping" retorts the Dryad.[13] Just upon awakening, Ariadne acknowledges how similar sleep and death are—an old mythic theme already present in Homer (*Il.* 14.231)—and maybe she is already aware of the true life that awaits her in the newly arrived vigil, forgetting her past journey: "Ah, where was I? Dead? Am I alive, alive again, alive still? … What have I dreamed? Well, I have already forgotten."[14]

2 The Awakening from Death in Nonnus' Poetry

Since the turn of this century, several studies have focused on how the underlying tension between the divine figures of Dionysus and Christ, within the framework of the last confrontation between paganism and Christianity in the cultural milieu of Late Antique Egypt, found its clearest literary expression in the works of the poet Nonnus of Panopolis.[15] It seems evident from the treatment of the two salvific deities by this poet that one of the most relevant mythemes in both his works—the *Dionysiaca* and the *Paraphrase*—is the regeneration or resurrection, the passing from a state of sleep or faintness, if not from death itself, to an awakening to a new life. The importance of this topic is obvious in the versified paraphrase of the Gospel of John the Evangelist. This paraphrase amplified all the episodes related to healing and resurrection, especially those of Lazarus and Christ himself. Interesting enough, the simile between sleep and death was very common not only in Homer, but also in Plato's work, who compared life in the world of the senses to sleep.[16] On the other hand, in Christian literature the reverse is true, that is, the simile was drawn between resurrection and awakening, especially regarding the episode of Lazarus.[17] In addition, there are many references, for example, in John 11,

13 Hofmannsthal and Strauss 1924, 27: Najade: Schläft sie? / Dryade: Schläft sie? / Najade: Nein! sie weinet! / Dryade: Weint im Schlafe! horch! sie stöhnet.

14 Hofmannsthal and Strauss 1924, 27: Ach! Wo war ich? Tot? / Und lebe, lebe wieder und lebe noch? … / Was hab' ich denn geträumt? / Weh! Schon vergessen!

15 The recent *Brill's Companion to Nonnus of Panopolis* includes an excellent update on the current state of research (Accorinti 2016).

16 See Hom. *Il.* 14.231 and Plat. *Apol.* 41c–d, 29a, 40c–e. The Allegory of the Cave (*Rep.* 514a–520a) also can be read as a sort of awakening to real life.

17 See again Spanoudakis 2014.

where the dead are said to be only sleeping: (such as Christ's phrase in 11.11 Λάζαρος ὁ φίλος ἡμῶν κεκοίμηται·ἀλλὰ πορεύομαι ἵνα ἐξυπνίσω αὐτόν, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up"[18]). In the end, Christ is the one who awakens those sleeping, as described in the Letter to the Ephesians (5.14): Ἔγειρε, ὁ καθεύδων, καὶ ἀνάστα ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν ("Sleeper, awake, rise from the dead!").

In order to understand how the idea of resurrection works within the context of the Dionysian poem, a more detailed explanation is necessary. As I have stated elsewhere, this idea constitutes the kernel of this work and its connecting point with the Christian poem.[19] In the *Dionysiaca* there are many references to the miraculous healings of various characters, who even come back to life in episodes of resurrection. They represent the key moments signaling the civilizing path of Dionysus in the world on his way to his apotheosis. Thus, the episodes of Tylus, Zagreus, and Iacchus become the most relevant examples of this mythical theme of miraculous healing and resurrection in the *Dionysiaca*.[20] In fact, this theme provides certain internal logic to Nonnus' poetry, acting as the driving mythic leitmotif. Through a series of miraculous healings and other references scattered throughout the *Dionysiaca*, the reader has an all-encompassing vision not only of Dionysus' beneficial deeds, but also of the characters on his side throughout his mythic biography. Within this dynamic, the metaphor of sleep and awakening is rather significant.

An example of awakening after death could be seen in the episode of Ampelus, one of the key myths used to interpret Nonnus' *Dionysus*, as analyzed recently by Kröll.[21] Ampelus' death and transfiguration provide his divine young lover, Dionysus, with his symbols of cult and salvation: the vine and, ultimately, the wine. The interpretation of Harmony's prophetic tablets, after Ampelus' death (*Dion.* 12.41 ff.),[22] establishes some mythic precedents of metamorphosis after death (12.70–81; 97–102). Next to Ampelus' corpse (12.117 ff.), the Fate Atropos announces to Dionysus, using a vocabulary of mythical echoes,[23] the resurrection of the youth who will return from an apparently inexorable death, underlining the regenerative character of the process and stating that "Ampelus, though dead has not perished." And, indeed, he soon starts to wake

18 All Bible translations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version.

19 Hernández de la Fuente 2008, 183–205.

20 See *Dion.* 25.451–552 (Tylus), 6.169–173 (Zagreus), and 48.951–957 (Iacchus). For a general interpretation, cf. Hernández de la Fuente 2008. For Tylus, cf. Spanoudakis 2013. For Zagreus and Iacchus, García-Gasco Villarrubia 2008, 485–502.

21 Kröll 2016, 198–240.

22 Already studied by Stegemann 1930, 122 ff.

23 Keydell 1932, 201–202.

up to life after the paradoxical dream of death as a "charming corpse." The verb used to describe the action of awakening is ἀναΐσσω, which literally means "rise up" or "stand up with a jump." This verb has a long epic tradition, even dating back to Homeric times, since it is the verb used, for example, when describing "standing up to fight" or "standing up to make a speech" (*Od.* 3.216). After this first jump, the youth starts to transform himself into a serpent first, and then into a "medicinal plant"[24] (*Dion.* 12.173–176 νήδυμον ἄνθος): his feet become rooted and afterwards he is transformed into a vine. This is how Dionysus discovers wine.[25]

Besides this example, we may consider the myth of Tylus in the *Dionysiaca* (25.451–552) and its evident parallel to the episode of Lazarus in the *Paraphrase*.[26] This is a case of real resurrection, which is described as an awakening from death. The Lydian hero Tylus dies after being attacked by a serpent and, upon a request made by his sister Moria, the giant Damasen kills the serpent. After witnessing how another serpent resuscitates the slayed one with some magical herb, Moria manages to bring her brother back to life. This very herb is identified with Dionysus' gifts, the vine and the wine, which are said to be capable of achieving similar miracles of bringing back to life. Moreover, we can find several epithets used to depict the wine of salvation in the *Dionysiaca* referring to the idea of resurrection in the description of the drug in *Dion.* 25.528–529 and 540–541.[27] The very same epithets appear in contexts of salvation and resurrection by means of Christ's Word in the *Paraphrase*.[28] The resurrections of the serpent and of Tylus (25.529–536 and 541–552) are the culmination of a series of previous episodes on healings and resurrections, among other examples are Zagreus' (book 6) and Ampelus' (book 12), which will end with Dionysus final apotheosis (book 48), preceded, as we shall see, by Ariadne's.

As a poetic paraphraser of John's Gospel, Nonnus underlines the idea of resurrection using the very same vocabulary that he used in the *Dionysiaca*, with clear parallels in the Lazarus episode (*Par.* 11.1–185). The paraphrase of John 11.11 is particularly revealing (*Par.* 11. 39–43):

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24 Which is related to "Zeus' flower" (Διὸς ἄνθος) in book 25.527.

25 For this "discovery," the praise of wine, preceding versions, etc., see Vian 1994; 1995, 199–214.

26 An analysis of this episode and its parallels to Lazarus' story is to be found in Espinar and Hernández de la Fuente 2002 and Spanoudakis 2013.

27 V.gr. *Dion.* 25.528 ὀδυνήφατον … ποίην, 529: ἀλεξήτειραν ὀλέθρου, 540: φερέσβιον … ποίην, 541: βοτάνη ζείδωρος, 541: ἀκεσσιπόνοισι κορύμβοις.

28 V.gr. ἀκεσσίπονος in the episode of Lazarus (*Par.* 11.99) or ἀλεξήτειραν in *Par.* 15.51.

ὕπνον ἀναγκαῖον καὶ ἀμεμφέα Λάζαρος εὕδει,
φίλτατος ἡμείων ξεινηδόκος· ἀλλὰ περήσω,
ὄφρα μιν ἐξ ὕπνοιο παλινδίνητον ἐγείρω.
καὶ λόγον ἀγνώσσοντες ἐμυθήσαντο μαθηταί·
Λάζαρος εἰ κνώσσει, σόος ἔσσεται.

"A needful but a harmless sleep, sleeps Lazarus,
Our most beloved host; but I will go to him
And I will rouse him up, back from his sleepy daze."
So the disciples, comprehending naught, replied:
"If Lazarus is sleeping, he will wake."[29]

The central idea of these lines is that the deceased is asleep and that Christ will try to wake him up or, as stated in the *Paraphrase*, to wake him "from the many-circled dream" (ἐξ ὕπνοιο παλινδίνητον ἐγείρω), for παλινδίνητος is to be understood literally, in spite of the translation, as "whirling round and round." For in this case we believe that Nonnus evokes Neoplatonic vocabulary underlining the circular path of the soul's journey.[30] Other key moments in the *Paraphrase* containing references to sleep as death and awakening as life are described by Nonnus with special interest. For example, in verse 11.47 it is stated that Lazarus sleeps "a returning sleep" (παλινάγρετον ὕπνον ἰαύειν) and in verse 11.79 it is said that Christ orders Martha and Mary's brother to "wake up back" (γνωτὸς σὸς παλίνορσος ἐγείρεται).

These and other parallels between both Nonnus' works suggest a common "ideological" background. Christ takes pity and heals (or resurrects) throughout the Gospel narration and Nonnus greatly amplifies it by putting particular emphasis on using a vocabulary common to contemporary Platonism.[31] In my view, Nonnus establishes clear parallels between the theological background of his paraphrase of the Gospel and the background of his interpretation of Late Antiquity Dionysus in his mythological work. In those examples and passages dealing with resurrection, Christ, the giver of life (*pheresbios*), and Dionysus, the provider of wine (*oinochytos*), seem to be interchangeable divinities in the work of Nonnus.[32] The poem gives an account of Dionysus' tears, which were shed to save humanity in the episode of Ampelus—an image difficult to inter-

29 English translation Prost 2003.
30 For the Neoplatonic vocabulary of circularity in Nonnus, cf. Hernández de la Fuente 2011.
31 As stated in Hernández de la Fuente 2014.
32 See my research on these similarities in Hernández de la Fuente 2013.

pret if not by means of Christian thought (*Dion.* 12.171[33]). Both Dionysus and Christ take pity on mortals, heal their illnesses and even resurrect the dead, awakening mortals to a new life.

3 The Awakening of Ariadne (and Her "Assumption") in Nonnus' Poetry

It is now time to consider how Nonnus deals with the episode of Ariadne in this cultural context, taking into account what we already know about the similarities between Dionysus and Christ in Late Antiquity.[34] The treatment of Ariadne's myth responds, on the one hand, to the tradition of the visual arts, and, on the other, to this well-known motif of awakening from death. In the *Dionysiaca*, the episode of Ariadne is a key moment in the god's journey throughout the long poem, since Dionysus' final apotheosis coincides with Ariadne's catasterism. Furthermore, their love story is foretold often in the work and it is an essential part of the main leitmotif of the poem, that is Dionysian salvation from death and the awakening to a new life. In various anticipatory references in the poem (*Dion.* 25.110 or 43.420 ff.), Ariadne appears as the subject of the salvation embodied by Dionysus who comes to bring her new and everlasting life. In *Dion.* 47.265–471, we meet a sleeping Ariadne in line 271 who, as some sort of Athena, looking lovely and virginal at the same time, is laying in (276) a Bacchic dream (292). Dionysus arrives with his festive procession to Naxos and orders his hosts to be silent in order not to wake up the maiden. This moment is masterfully represented in a painting by Titian at the National Gallery in London.

In this opening passage (*Dion.* 47.265–297), Bacchus (47.266) travels escorted (ἐκώμασεν) to the island of Naxos, described as "rich in vines" (ἀμπελόεσσαν). This was the place where Theseus had just left behind the exiled maiden Ariadne, who has fallen asleep on the beach (47.269–270 ὑπνώουσαν ἐπ᾽ αἰγιαλοῖσιν ἐάσσας / παρθενικὴν λιπόπατριν). Dionysus instantly falls in love with the abandoned woman (47.271–272 ὑπναλέην … ἐρημαίην Ἀριάδνην) and orders his bacchants not to make any noise in their *komos* and "let Cypris sleep" (47.276 ἐάσσατε Κύπριν ἰαύειν). Then, in a long speech, the god compares Ariadne with several mythical figures: first with Aphrodite, and next with Pasithea "who married the wicked Sleep." This Pasithea is one of the Charites (Hom. *Il.* 14.268, 276); she was married to Hypnos, the god of sleep, and was tradition-

33 Cf. already Bogner 1934, 332.

34 On the topic of Ariadne in Nonnus, see Shorrock 2014.

ally considered to be a daughter of Dionysus (*Dion.* 15.91, 33.11 ff.).[35] Dionysus also rhetorically compares Ariadne's complexion to that of various divinities of legendary beauty: Aphrodite (*Dion.* 47.276), the Charites (278), Hebe (281), Selene (283), Thetis (285), Artemis (286–290), and Athena (292). Dionysus artfully strives to prevent his bacchants and satyrs from disturbing the morning dream of the beautiful young woman but, finally, the ill-married Ariadne wakes up on the sand (295–296 ἀπὸ ψαμάθοιο δὲ δειλὴ / ὕπνον ἀποσκεδάσασα δυσίμερος ἔγρετο κούρη).

These comparisons with Aphrodite or Artemis are the focus of the baroque monologue by the god, who arrives to wake the maiden sleeping on the sand. Despite the silence that, paradoxically, the god of commotion tries to impose, Ariadne awakes a little bit later, without yet realizing Dionysus' epiphany. She then sings her famous lamentation in which she complains about her abandonment and her desire to therefore sleep (*Dion.* 47.320–329). She then asks Theseus to return with his vain and oneiric grace, if only for a second (47.345–349), regretting not finding some sort of thread like the one she gave to him to escape safely from the labyrinth, which this time would allow her to find her way to Athens across the sea (47.384–389). Dionysus listens, hidden away and enchanted by her lament (τοῖα κινυρομένης ἐπετέρπετο Βάκχος ἀκούων, 47.419), takes pity on her, and, as consolation, addresses to her some "words that bewitch her heart" (ἑῇ φρενοθελγέι φωνῇ, 47.427). Dionysus' speech compares her past life as a mortal, with Theseus, with the promise of immortality brought about by her mystical union with the god, which includes the offering of the crown of heavens, a traditional symbol of the marriage with a god (*Dion.* 47.428–430):

> Παρθένε, τί στενάχεις ἀπατήλιον ἀστὸν Ἀθήνης;
> μνῆστιν ἔα Θησῆος: ἔχεις Διόνυσον ἀκοίτην,
> ἀντὶ μινυνθαδίου πόσιν ἄφθιτον ...

> Maiden, why do you sorrow for the deceitful man of Athens? Let pass the memory of Theseus; you have Dionysos for your lover, a husband incorruptible for the husband of a day![36]

Dionysus' speech in the following lines abounds with comparisons of the human groom with the divine one (emphasizing that the maiden is destined

35 It is mentioned elsewhere by Nonnus, imitating Homer (cf. *Dion.* 31.121, 131, 186; 33.27, 40; 34.45).
36 All English translation of Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* come from Rouse 1940.

to have “a nobler bridal”, *Dion.* 47.443, ἀρειοτέροις ὑμεναίοις). He also makes references to the inferior bed of Theseus in comparison to his own divine one. He promises to reward her with an apotheosis or catasterism by saying: “but for you I will make a starry crown, that you might be called the shining bedfellow of crown-loving Dionysos” (*Dion.* 47.451–452 ἀλλά σοι ἀστερόεν τελέσω στέφος, ὥς κεν ἀκούσῃς / εὐνέτις αἰγλήεσσα φιλοστεφάνου Διονύσου). After hearing this, Ariadne abandons the memory of Theseus and enters a sort of ecstasy foretelling her catasterism (47.453 ἐπάλλετο χάρματι κούρῃ).

At the end of the poem, in book 48, which is also the last one of the whole Dionysian epic, Ariadne's catasterism takes place before the apotheosis of Dionysus himself. This coincidence is far from accidental, since the young woman is brought back to life and joins Dionysus in his apotheosis. They will then sit next to his father in Olympus after Dionysus fulfills his duties on Earth by spreading his gifts of ecstatic dancing and wine, and by working through and establishing his trajectory as a god. The most interesting aspect of Ariadne's ascension is that it takes place after her death, as a soul free of its body, and Nonnus could have followed a variety of traditions of deaths and burials of Ariadne to describe this transition.[37] Nevertheless, Nonnus chose death by combat for Ariadne, as the leader of the bacchants during the Dionysian invasion of Argos (*Dion.* 47.665 ff.). Here, Ariadne took up her arms (47.666 κορυσσομένην Ἀριάδνην) and fought Perseus and his men, but she was petrified by the head of Medusa wielded by Perseus during the fight, putting an end to her life.

How can we understand, therefore, the transition between the awakening of Ariadne in Naxos, her death in combat, and her resurrection? Nonnus resorts to prophetic dreams, an element of narrative cohesion throughout the poem,[38] in an innovative manner. Thus, in book 48 of the *Dionysiaca*,[39] “the soul of dead Ariadne borne on the wind came, and beside Dionysus sleeping sound, stood” (48.530–531 ψυχὴ δ᾽ ἠνεμόφοιτος ἀποφθιμένης Ἀριάδνης, / νήδυμον ὑπνώοντι παρισταμένη Διονύσῳ), to reprimand him for having forgotten his promise of salvation and subsequent apotheosis. In a wonderful turn of events, their perspectives are changed and now a dreamy Ariadne appears to a sleeping Dionysus in his dreams. It is Dionysus who suddenly and impetuously wakes up now (48.564 καὶ θρασὺς ἔγρετο Βάκχος), taking pity on Ariadne (48.565 ᾤκτειρεν). We can see again his compassion, similar to Christ's, before the awakening of those sleeping to a new life. This is a curious inversion of awakenings, since

37 E.g., Plutarch, *Tes.* 20.1 mentions some versions.

38 Ruíz Pérez 2002.

39 After the episode of Aura—the breeze—the last of Dionysus lovers, with whom the god begets Iacchus, the Eleusinian Dionysus.

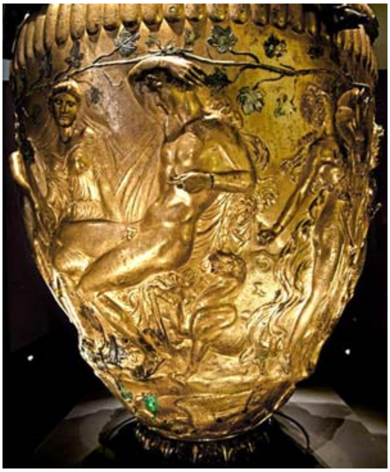

FIGURE 11.7
Derveni Crater, bronze, between 350 and 330 BC. Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki

Dionysus, the god who awakes the sleepy Ariadne, seems here awaken by her oneiric visit. This image is reminiscent of a famous iconographic representation of Ariadne's myth in the Derveni's krater.

The exceptional large bronze krater weighing almost 40 kilos (Fig. 11.7),[40] represents this very same metaphor regarding the idea of dream and death, as well as the analogy of awakening and the new life that, according to the interpretation proposed by Grassigli, now subverts the roles.[41] It is Dionysus who, paradoxically, seems to be awakening here. He is represented reclined in a landscape, supposedly after a night of lovemaking, and leans his right leg over Ariadne's left leg, who is sitting beside him. Dionysus then appears to be awakening, while at the other side of the piece the noisy thiasus in honor of the god is taking place. Meanwhile, Ariadne, who is the sleeper par excellence, keeps a vigil over the god, probably revealing a message related to the Dionysian mysteries. The deceased in whose tomb this splendid piece was laid was also expecting, upon awaking, the joy of eternal nuptials, like those of Dionysus and Ariadne. Therefore, the cycle of sleeping and awakening is usually compared with death and resurrection, as is evidenced in the use of Ariadne in funeral iconography in Greek ceramics.[42]

The end of the poem finally focuses on the ascension of Ariadne to heaven, shortly followed by that of the god himself. Dionysus ascends to heaven while sacrifices are made in Athens to him in his triple dedication and birth, from

40 Barr-Sharrar 2008.
41 Grassigli 1999, 99–143.
42 Isler-Kerényi 2014, 231–232.

Persephone, Semele, and Aura (*Dion.* 48.968 "in the dance lately made, the Athenians beat the step in honor of Zagreus and Bromius and Iacchus all together"), a sort of Dionysian trinity leading to the climax and end of the poem (48.969–978):

οὐδὲ Κυδωναίων ἐπελήσατο Βάκχος Ἐρώτων,
ἀλλὰ καὶ ὀλλυμένης προτέρης ἐμνήσατο νύμφης:
καὶ Στέφανον περίκυκλον ἀποιχομένης Ἀριάδνης
μάρτυν ἑῆς φιλότητος ἀνεστήριξεν Ὀλύμπῳ,
ἄγγελον οὐ λήγοντα φιλοστεφάνων ὑμεναίων.
καὶ θεὸς ἀμπελόεις πατρώιον αἰθέρα βαίνων
πατρὶ σὺν εὐώδινι μιῆς ἔψαυσε τραπέζης,
καὶ βροτέην μετὰ δαῖτα, μετὰ προτέρην χύσιν οἴνου
οὐράνιον πίε νέκταρ ἀρειοτέροισι κυπέλλοις,
σύνθρονος Ἀπόλλωνι, συνέστιος υἱέι Μαίης.

But Bacchos had not forgotten his Cydonian darling, no, he remembered still the bride once his, then lost, and he placed in Olympus the rounded crown of Ariadne passed away, a witness of his love, an everlasting proclaimer of garlanded wedding. Then the vine-god ascended into his father's heaven, and touched one table with the father who had brought him to birth; after the banquets of mortals, after the wine once poured out, he quaffed heavenly nectar from nobler goblets, on a throne beside Apollo, at the hearth beside Maia's son.

In this last apotheosis of Ariadne, the soul was able to ascend due to the power granted by Nonnus to Dionysus. This catasterism is parallel to the ascension of the divinity himself to Olympus together with his father. It is remarkable to see this last scene of apotheosis both of Ariadne and Dionysus just at the end of the *Dionysiaca*, a poem composed between the demise of pagan antiquity and the beginning of the Byzantine era. Shorrock's interpretation of the theme is based on the comparison between Nonnus' pagan and Christian poems, both in sharp ideological opposition, with Richard Strauss' opera *Ariadne auf Naxos*, because while the composer (on whom more later) "confronted us with a provocative juxtaposition of *opera seria* and *commedia dell'arte*, Nonnus presents us with a similarly provocative juxtaposition of the worlds of Christ and Dionysus."[43]

43 Shorrock 2014, 332.

Finally, within this Nonnian context of assimilation between Dionysus and Christ, it is worthwhile to consider the parallel between Ariadne and Mary, since both of them ascended to the heavens in apotheosis guided by Dionysus on the one hand, and the Christian God on the other. The apotheosis of Dionysus' mother, Semele,[44] or his wife, Ariadne, ascending to heaven—the latter as Corona Borealis—could be compared with the Catholic dogma of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, characterized by Carl Gustav Jung as "the most relevant symbolic event since the Reformation."[45] Although the Assumption dates back to the apocryphal tradition of narratives transmitted throughout the fifth and sixth centuries, such as the *transitus Mariae* or *transitus virginis*, it would only become an official Church dogma in the twentieth century, upon the basis of several biblical passages.[46]

Likewise, there is an interesting parallel between the theme of Ariadne and the Transit or Dormition of Mary (Κοίμησις Θεοτόκου), a tradition of the Eastern Church, also based upon apocryphal texts dated to the fifth century narrating the dream of the Virgin and her transition to heaven without dying. The common mytheme, indeed, to both traditions describing the transit of the Virgin Mary to the netherworld[47] underlines the fact that the Mother of God did not undergo any natural illness or death.[48] The comparison with the bipartite mythic sequence in which Dionysus rescues Ariadne from her sleep/death (first) and takes her up as an immortal to heaven (second), thus preventing her final (real) death, is very significant.[49] These coincidences have been pointed out by Jung and members of his school, who see in these assimilations of Classical pagan beliefs into Christianity a common archetype: that of the Goddess Mother; specifically, in the case of the ascension of Semele/Ariadne and the Assumption of the Virgin Mary.[50] Before being popularized by Jung's psychological approach, other scholars, mostly Protestant, had previously drawn comparisons between these pagan and Christian models but only in order

44 The similarities between the Virgin Mary and Semele are also underlined by the Christian use of Euripides' *Bacchae* in the *Christus patiens*, cf. Friesen 2015, 257.

45 Stevens 2001, 321.

46 One of them, Ap. 12. The Assumption of Mary was officially defined and dogmatically approved by Pius XII in the apostolic constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*, dated in 1950. Cf. in general, Haffner 2004, 217 ff.

47 Shoemaker 2002.

48 Doctrinal support was given by theologians such as Ambrose of Milan in his commentary to the Gospel of Lucas (*PL* 15.1574), John of Damascus (*PG* 96.714, 738), or Gregory of Tours (*PL* 71.708).

49 Hart and Stevenson 1995, 172–173.

50 Jung 2014, 46.

to censure them. For example, Alexander Hislop in his anti-Catholic pamphlet *The Two Babylons* (1853), actually compares the Assumption and the episodes of Semele and Ariadne in order to discredit the former.[51]

4 Conclusion

Today, fortunately, scholars do not need to define Nonnus as either exclusively a pagan or a Christian, despite the long academic discussion that was mainly concerned with the nature of his beliefs. Current research, in my opinion, allows us to build bridges between both worlds—between their literature, their aesthetics, and their ideology. Nonnus presents Dionysus not as Christ's rival, but as a parallel, complementary figure, almost another incarnation of the same redemptory divinity.[52] In Nonnus' great poetry Christ and Dionysus are both the life-givers who heal in a miraculous way, as well as the ones who were miraculously brought back to life and apotheosized. Considering the mythic sequence of awakening from death as one of the key themes in the *Dionysiaca* (its relevance in the *Paraphrase* can hardly be overstated) allows for a universal interpretation of both poems attributed to Nonnus. The god that comes to awake mortals is seen by the poet as the idea of divinity itself: the son of the Father made word, flesh, and vine; a healing god by means of the plant that he brought to this world; the god who promises happiness to mortals in his coming and then takes them to a joyous netherworld, as is the very case of Ariadne. He is a *soter* Dionysus, undoubtedly historically related in his origins with Hellenistic euergetism and with Roman emperors. They lend him their civilizing mission, but, above all, Nonnus' Dionysus is heavily influenced by the other great divinity with whom he will have to compete in Late Antiquity, and who would finally get the upper hand across the Mediterranean: Christ. Since the Dionysus of Late Antiquity would also have an influence upon Christ, these crossed influences are the only possible way to explain this new version of the

51 *The Two Babylons; or, the Papal Worship proved to be the worship of Nimrod and his wife*, Edinburgh (1853 and 1858), Ch. III, Section 4, on the festivity of the Assumption of Mary. He states that Protestantism reflects an authentic and primitive form of Christianity while Catholicism is a mixture organized by Constantine to adapt religion to the Roman state, an amalgamation of traditional Greco-Latin paganism and, eventually, beliefs from Babylon—of course diabolic—and Christianity. Among other things, the following were considered to be pagan: the cult of saints, Eucharistic liturgy (similar to Greek mysteries), and the cult of Mary, which would be a transposition of a fertility goddess (Ishtar-Aphrodite-Venus).

52 Fornaro 2000, 997–998; Ebersbach 2000, 43–62.

traditional Greek god (as he is characterized, for example, in Euripides' *Bacchae*) and his progressive transformation into a god, son of Father Zeus, with a mission for humanity; a god who cries when confronted with the sorrows of human beings, takes pity on them and heals their ailments with miraculous gifts.

Furthermore, it can be attested that Dionysus, the god who saves the soul, and the mytheme of Ariadne's awakening have a clear survival in Christ and Christianity, just as Bacchic mysteries can be looked at through the lens of the Christian liturgy. This survival is also shown by the parallel evolution of the pagan divinity and the Christian one in terms of issues related to salvation and redemption beyond death; aspects that were absent in the figure of the archaic and Classical Dionysus, although they were implied in his mysteries. Dionysus is also transformed, thanks to Christ, and he would eventually change into a protean figure, very much to the taste of Nonnus. Furthermore, Dionysus' transformation, that is the paradoxical awakening of the divinity's conscience, also provoked by Ariadne, is acknowledged by the god himself in the words pronounced by his character in Hofmannsthal/Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Dionysus is the god who awakens, but he is at the same time the god who will eventually wake himself up, and he will be transformed or transfigured, as in the Derveni's krater or in the work of Nonnus of Panopolis.

Finally, let us go back to Hofmannsthal/Strauss' masterly reworking of this issue in modernity, in order to evoke the paradox of the mutual immortalization of the couple Dionysus/Ariadne, in literature, philosophy, and the arts. At the end of the opera, Dionysus acknowledges his own transformation before Ariadne's catasterism with these words:

> Ich bin ein anderer als ich war!
> Der Sinn des Gottes ist wach in mir,
> dein herrlich Wesen ganz zu fassen!
> Die Glieder reg' ich in göttlicher Lust!
>
> I am quite other than I was,
> The power of godhood awakes in me;
> Fierce longing quite thy soul to capture
> Stirs all my limbs with rapture divine![53]

53 Hofmannsthal and Strauss 1943. For the background of the reinterpretation of the myth in the opera by Hoffmannsthal and Strauss, see Gilliam 2005; 2014, 150–151.

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CHAPTER 12

Female Characterization and Gender Reversal in Nonnus and Colluthus

Cosetta Cadau

This chapter stems from my research on Colluthus' *Abduction of Helen*, and expands on Gerlaud and Hadjittofi's discussions of the Nonnian female characters as possible reflections of contemporary models for the lifestyle of the Christian community.[1] One of the points arising from such analyses is the need for further investigation of the representation of femininity and masculinity in Late Antiquity: heroines such as Aura in Nonnus, and Aphrodite in Colluthus for instance, represent radically opposite types of femininity that may reflect the gender models of the society of the time, in which Christianity naturally played a key role as the leading religion.[2] This discussion also involves the male sphere, as gender in Late Antique literature is often defined through the feminization of male characters, or the masculinization of female characters.

In this study, I am going to discuss two characters as representatives of two contrasting models of femininity in Late Antiquity. Both Aura in Nonnus' *Dion.* 48 and Aphrodite in Colluthus' *Abduction of Helen* play a central role within each epic: Aura's story is strategically placed at the end of the *Dionysiaca*, the last and most challenging to read in a series of rapes, and it encapsulates the power of Dionysus through the story of the punishment of a very unlucky character. In Colluthus, Aphrodite is the undisputed protagonist of his version of the myth of Helen, as she displays the force of her inescapable power by acting as the mastermind behind Paris' journey to Sparta and the subsequent infatuation and "abduction" of Helen.[3] The characterization of both heroines is invested more in their individual definition of femininity than in their actions, and some of the concerns of such a definition are also reflected by other characters in both the epic and the novel genre: for instance, the preservation of

1 Gerlaud 2005; Hadjittofi 2008. I wish to express my gratitude to Gennaro d'Ippolito and Fotini Hadjittofi for their valuable comments and suggestions on this chapter.

2 Gerlaud 2005, 244–258.

3 Readers might agree that the departure of Helen resembles more a voluntary estrangement rather than an abduction, as the character is besotted with her "kidnapper" and decides to leave voluntarily.

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virginity is a preoccupation of Chalcomede and Nicaea in Nonnus, as well as of Chariclea in Heliodorus. However, while Chalcomede is a virgin supportive of Dionysus and ends up being glorified, Aura is very unlucky because she suffers the worst consequences of acting against Dionysus.[4] The lifestyles led, and sometimes promoted, by these heroines resemble the role models proposed by the early church fathers and in contemporary hagiography.

Producing evidence for such connections between texts of pagan content and Christian ideology poses a challenge to scholarship; Shorrock's monograph on Nonnus, for instance, shows how complicated a task it is to come up with definite conclusions on the matter.[5] The Christian context within which these texts were produced cannot be overemphasized. To complicate matters further, we must consider that both the authors of Greek epic and the Christian writers received a similar education based on the classical tradition. Moreover, if, on the one hand, the conventions of the epic genre dictated a subject matter of pagan tradition, on the other hand, the text coexisted with, and thus reflected contemporary social and religious ideologies and concerns.

Aura is a virgin huntress devoted to Artemis; she has a muscular figure and the toned chest of an adolescent (*Dion.* 48.248 and 361–369), and her best-kept treasure is her virginity, which she tries to preserve at all costs. On the other hand, Aphrodite in Colluthus is a voluptuous goddess who exudes sexuality; she is comfortable with, and shows off, her womanly body and is completely unconcerned with modesty. She is also a mother.

The tale of the rape of Aura, who, like Philomela and Nicaea, wanted to preserve her virginity, is probably the most challenging to read[6] and has attracted much scholarly interest recently.[7] Aura not only has to suffer the violence committed with trickery by Dionysus (she is intoxicated with wine and falls asleep),[8] but then she has to deal with an unwanted pregnancy and a terrifying labor; the girl cries because of her physical pain as well as her misfortune, and afterwards seeks to kill her children in an unappeasable rage, and ends up killing herself.

The model of femininity represented by Aura is one that rejects and eschews the duties traditionally assigned to women. This can be schematized in four stages: first, Aura fiercely rejects sexuality, which is ultimately imposed on her by Dionysus through rape as a punishment for mocking Artemis' womanly

4 For a discussion of the character of Chalcomede, see Hadjittofi 2014.
5 Shorrock 2000.
6 Lightfoot 1998, 295.
7 Schmiel 1993; Gerlaud 2005; Hadjittofi 2008.
8 Aura is also bound by Dionysus; see Lightfoot 1998, 296–300.

breasts. Second, Aura suffers a very unlucky fate: after the rape, not only does she become pregnant, but she becomes pregnant with twins—this can be seen as, from a Christian point of view as well, the worst that can happen to someone who has been preserving her virginity so fiercely. The maiden is devastated and goes on a killing frenzy to avenge her abuse. Third, Artemis normally protects women in labor, but on this occasion she delays the birth of the twins, forcing unlucky Aura to endure a painful, unassisted, and prolonged labor, and to give birth alone. Finally, the role of motherhood, which includes breastfeeding, is refused by Aura as she attempts to kill the newborns: one dies and the survivor will become the successor of Dionysus. Eventually, Aura sacrifices her life rather than becoming a mother.

In Colluthus, Aphrodite behaves in the exact opposite way. Not only does she proudly embrace the duties that Aura rejected, but she embodies them and promotes them by means of mirror characters which reflect her attitude or make it stronger by contrast. At *Rapt.* 155–165, as the goddess bares her breasts, Paris instantly crowns her as the winner of the beauty contest: she *is* sexuality. The prize that she offers to Paris, Helen, also embodies sexuality: "instead of lordship, I will see that you climb into Helen's bed" (165), she says. The breasts of Aphrodite, fully exposed, are a symbol of motherhood, eros, beauty, and power, and they contrast vividly with Athena's chest, covered by a metal breastplate (184). Ἠνορέη ("manhood") is the skill that Athena offers to Paris as a reward at 145 and that Aphrodite counteroffers with ἀγλαΐη and a lovely bride (164, 173). In Nonnus, this is the virtue that Dionysus, threatened by allegations of effeminacy, must demonstrate through his toils in order to produce evidence of his superiority and manhood (*Dion.* 25.27–30).

Dionysus' challenge is now Athena's. Furthermore, if in Nonnus Dionysus had to demonstrate ἠνορέη to reject the charges of effeminacy against him, in Colluthus Athena is proud of her manliness and does everything within her power to reject femininity. Both divinities aspire to the same manliness, but here is a woman who rejects the main attribute of her gender. If for Athena excellence belonged to her followers, for Aphrodite it belongs to women. The victory is sealed in Colluthus on behalf of the whole feminine gender at *Rapt.* 163: "It is thanks to beauty that women triumph mightily."[9] Aphrodite is living proof that the key to success is no longer manhood (ἠνορέη) but beauty (ἀγλαΐη), as she is crowned the winner because she has devoted herself to beauty (*Rapt.* 173 ἀγλαΐην ἐφίλησα, καὶ ἀγλαΐη με διώκει). Her beauty suddenly becomes visible, tangible, and accessible, unlike the gifts that have been prom-

9 Echoing, e.g., *Dion.* 34.323, where cheeks are said to be mightier than javelins.

ised by Hera and Athena, both intangible and not immediately accessible. The goddess, standing there with her breasts on show, can very confidently urge the judge: "Pick me and forget wars: choose my beauty" (*Rapt.* 160). The reward she promises to Paris is also tangible: Aphrodite does not offer a virtue (such as manhood or sovereignty) but a lovely bride (*Rapt.* 164 ἐρατὴν παράκοιτιν) who has a name, and the physicality of the whole scene climaxes in the next line where Aphrodite urges Paris to join Helen in bed (*Rapt.* 165 Ἑλένης ἐπιβήσεο λέκτρων). Ἠνορέη is then a virtue that Athena paradoxically does not display as she loses to "unwarlike" Aphrodite (*Rapt.* 92 ἄναλκις; *Dion.* 35.168 ἀπτόλεμος): in fact her speech to the Loves ahead of the contest in the *Abduction*, which had begun as the pitiful plea for help of an unconfident and helpless mother, grows into a war cry from which the goddess emerges stronger than ever, ready to face her competition and armed with much better chances than her rivals. Her new identity as a warrior is confirmed by her display of ἠνορέη.

Athena's breastplate is now no longer the symbol of military power, but armor that covers and suppresses her femininity. She is no longer a model of manhood, warfare skills, bravery, but is simply a half-woman, in between genders, destined to a mixed, unclear and therefore devalued identity. This, of course, gains significance if we imagine how Christian audiences might have read such a characterization. There are, of course, multiple coexisting Christian contexts within the Christian community, where degrees of more or less extreme asceticism and liberalism are endorsed and received in different ways. We can imagine that, for some worshippers, this version of Athena might have represented an exemplary paradigm of asceticism, making a statement of her rejection of sexuality by wearing a protective cuirass against worldly temptation. On the other hand, Christians of more liberal views might have seen this Athena as an epitome of what a Christian woman should not be, a despicable half-woman who rejects motherhood, i.e., the fundamental prerogative and duty of women in certain Christian doctrines.

Natural childbirth is established as a key criterion of superiority since Aphrodite uses it as an argument to mock Athena, who was born through unnatural childbirth, through a cut on her father's head. This scene is modeled on *Dionysiaca* 9.235–236, where Semele, proud of her son Dionysus, casts an invective on Hera and appeals to her to admit her defeat: "Give place to me all! For Semele alone had a husband who got her pregnant and laboured for the same child."[10] Nonnus' *agon* between Semele and Hera is centered around the question of whose son is better, and Semele claims victory since Dionysus was born from

10 Semele claims her right to superiority based on the same point also at *Dion.* 10.129–132.

his father Zeus directly, and nursed by Rhea, Zeus' mother. Dionysus is born from Zeus' thigh, while Athena is born from Zeus' head,[11] but while in Nonnus to be born from the father represents the unique factor that grants superiority to the god, in Colluthus (*Rapt.* 181–183) this makes Athena inferior to Aphrodite.

A further point to be considered is the labor. In Nonnus, *Dion.* 9.209–211, Semele says: "Zeus became mother in my place and delivered my son; he sowed him as a father and gave birth to the one he had sown. He gave birth to a child through a counterfeit womb of his own, and he forced nature to change." Λόχευσε (*Dion.* 9.209) confirms the presence of labor pangs and childbirth, which are exactly what is missing from the birth of Athena, who was born ἀλόχευτον (*Rapt.* 183). Aura claims not to have given birth to her newborns (*Dion.* 48.897). The emphasis on the lack of labor seems to suggest that being a woman and/or a mother requires awareness and deliberate use of one's body. Aphrodite's first argument in Colluthus is in fact that Athena was not even delivered by a mother (*Rapt.* 181: οὐ μαιώσατο μήτηρ) through the natural process but was carried by Zeus in his head and delivered by the axe of Hephaestus. To recount the birth of Athena, however, Colluthus chooses a metaphor of the fertility of the earth (*Rapt.* 181–183 ἔσπειρε, ῥίζα and ἀνεβλάστησε), which contrasts ironically with the supernatural birth of Athena, especially with the image of the root of iron (*Rapt.* 182 ῥίζα σιδήρου) through which Athena was delivered. The verb σπείρω chosen by Colluthus continues to echo *Dion.* 9.229, where Hera generates Hephaestus ἄσπορος, and also Nonnus' *Paraphrase* 19.144–145, where Jesus is ἄσπορος υἱός.[12]

Colluthus then twists the way in which self-reproduction is treated: Nonnus uses ἀλόχευτος to define nature as self-reproducing but also, once again, Christ in *Paraphrase* 19.145, where the word gains allegorical meanings that exploit its full semantic potential arising from biblical texts; Colluthus uses it to humiliate Athena, implying that to be born through the alternative process is not something to be proud of, but, on the contrary, something to be ashamed of,

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11 The birth of both gods from Zeus is evoked in Nonnus' powerful proem to the *Dionysiaca* (1.1–10), for which see Shorrock 2008, 101.

12 Colluthus' terminology echoes other processes of self-reproduction from the *Dionysiaca*: at *Dion.* 24.269 Eros looks at the sterile cosmos as Aphrodite has turned to Athena's handloom; in the invective against Hera, *Dion.* 9.217, Semele acknowledges that Maia delivered Hermes, but makes a point that the child was certainly not delivered by her groom (like her Dionysus): οὐκ ἐλόχευσεν ἀκοίτης. Dionysus is also ἀλόχευτος at *Dion.* 8.27, and so is Athena at *Dion.* 20.54: αὐτοτελῆ γονόεντος ἀμήτορα παῖδα καρήνου, "The motherless daughter born by herself from the delivering head of her father." A full discussion of other Nonnian passages that combine Platonic and biblical motifs is in Cadau 2015, 118–121.

as, according to Aphrodite, Athena has nothing to boast about: οἷα δὲ κυδιάεις ἀνεμώλιος, Ἀτρυτώνη (*Rapt.* 180).

Motherhood is celebrated by Colluthus in the scene in which Aphrodite summons the Loves for support ahead of the contest (*Rapt.* 86–98), acting once again as the model mother. Her strong and loving bond with her φίλα τέκνα, who hug her and call her τιθήνη, is clear. Later on, motherhood also acts as a criterion of superiority over childless goddesses, as, in her invective against Hera (*Rapt.* 174–179), Aphrodite mocks her because her children, the Graces, Ares and Hephaestus, are nowhere to be seen now, when their mother needs their support after her humiliating defeat.[13] The type of motherhood that is embodied by Aphrodite is therefore defined by natural childbirth, as we have seen, and by filial support. These features paint a portrait that resembles the sort of family that might have followed the more liberal Christian doctrines that recognized the role of mothers as pillars of the Christian family; in such a "natural" family model, all members are expected to play an active part, like Aphrodite's children who are there for her in time of need. Accepting that Colluthus is advocating this type of family, however, poses further questions about his choice of subject matter, since the mirror character of Aphrodite, Helen, who displays the same gender awareness as the goddess, is responsible for failing to support her own family. The entire plot in fact leads to the collapse of the family composed of Menelaus, Helen, and Hermione, and responsibility for this damage falls on Helen, the mother, i.e., precisely the family member who is meant to be the center of that family model being endorsed. In order to overcome this possible discrepancy, perhaps appropriate relevance must be given to the role of Hermione's lengthy monologue in the final part of the epyllion (*Rapt.* 328–388). In keeping with the model of "natural" family discussed above, Hermione (daughter) laments the disappearance of Helen (mother), and tirelessly searches for her, emphasizing the strength of the bonds that unite them (333–334 and 374–375). The child's speech is centered around the grief that the departure of Helen has caused her, and shifts the focus of the action away from Aphrodite's role in Helen's decision, and over to the responsibility of Helen the mother in the abandonment of her own child. Hence, while in the dialogue between Paris and Helen, Aphrodite is exposed as very much responsible for the infatuation of Helen, which then leads to her departure, in the dialogue between Hermione, her maids, and Helen (in the dream) we sense that Helen has failed to fulfill her duties as a mother in Hermione's fam-

13 See Hom. *Il.* 15.14–77, with Cadau 2015, 131 for discussion of this model.

ily, despite the fact that Aphrodite is behind her infatuation with Paris. The change of focus is what activates this shift in perspective and enables us to, first, somewhat forgive the besotted married princess, and second, to condemn her as the mother who abandoned her child. Helen, the "victim" of an abduction for which Aphrodite is morally responsible, becomes then responsible for leaving her daughter behind as a victim. We could argue that Colluthus means to advocate the "natural" family precisely by exposing the consequences of its collapse.

When we consider definitions of gender in Colluthus, boundaries seem to be established by awareness, both physical and mental. Aphrodite mocks Athena especially concerning her character, as she prefers wars to love, she lacks expertise in matters of marriage, and her gender is ambiguous (*Rapt.* 185–189). Athena has already been defined as γάμων ἀδίδακτος (*Rapt.* 33) when the goddess reluctantly attended the wedding of Thetis and Peleus; now Aphrodite accuses her of lacking the basic marriage skills, harmony and concord (*Rapt.* 186 ἁρμονίης ἀδίδακτος, ὁμοφροσύνης ἀδαήμων). Athena is not simply ridiculed because she never married: she is deeply insulted for missing the crucial value that makes a relationship, that ὁμοφροσύνη that Odysseus wishes for Nausicaa, together with a husband and a home in Homer, *Od.* 6.181. Athena is unable to share feelings or experiences with anyone else; she was born without a mother; she craves battles and enjoys attacking others rather than loving them; she cannot experience the beauty of being like-minded. As she stands in front of Aphrodite as the target of her invective, the initial impression evolves to one of a sexless, masculine, and unattractive goddess: Athena's gender is questioned and ridiculed, her body is slandered, while Aphrodite shows off her breasts and wins the beauty pageant.

The ultimate insult addressed to Athena by Aphrodite is: "Do you not know that the Athenas like you are much more impotent when, for all their exulting in glorious wars, they realize that their body is neither male nor female?" (*Rapt.* 187–189). These words may remind readers of the abusive address endured by Artemis in Nonnus' *Dion.* 48.361–369, where Aura ridicules the goddess' womanly body while flaunting her toned and muscular figure, and especially of Musaeus 249: "do you not know that Cypris was born from the sea, and over the sea and over our pain she reigns?" The reference to Musaeus' line compels an educated reader to make a connection with Aphrodite's origin (her birth from the sea) and to notice that paradoxically, Aphrodite has no real right to accuse Athena of having been born unnaturally, as she herself was born unnaturally. And yet she speaks as a model mother. However, one wonders which type of model mother she is. Hardly an ancient mother, one that was not meant to be a sexual being. This particular "model mother," Aphrodite, has been behaving

as a rather sexual being in this poem, so perhaps we could legitimately suspect that Colluthus is being ironic in making the goddess utter such surprising reproaches.

The question about ambiguity regarding gender reappears at *Rapt.* 302–304, where Paris pays a strange compliment to Helen by praising her femininity: "Women born among the Argives are not like you: for although they grow with weaker limbs, they look like men, and are just counterfeit women." Helen is here presented as another icon of femininity and a double of Aphrodite, whose femininity is based on a womanly body and on her motherhood: Helen's femininity is based on knowledge—of ὁμοφροσύνη and concord, of course; Paris does not need to tell her since she already knows her gender, she is aware of her femininity. Note the reoccurring concepts: ἀγνώσσεις and ἀνάλκιδες in *Rapt.* 187 correspond to οἶσθα and ἀνάλκιδος 301, μελέων 189 to μελέεσσιν 303, ἄρσενες and γυναῖκες 189 to ἀνδρῶν and γυναῖκες 304.

There seems to be a connection between gender and knowledge, implying that femininity can be taught and learned. Athena is derided as she is γάμων ἀδίδακτος, ἁρμονίης ἀδίδακτος, and ὁμοφροσύνης ἀδαήμων: she does not know how to be a partner. And yet, Athena promises Paris that she will teach him manhood in *Rapt.* 145: πολέμους τε καὶ ἠνορέην σε διδάξω ("I will teach you about war and bravery"). In Xenophon's *Symposium* 2. 12, Socrates concludes that women can be taught courage and other male virtues, given that the female dancer they are watching can bravely jump through hoops, despite her gender.[14] So, while in Xenophon a man teaches male skills to a woman, in Colluthus a woman (Athena, a goddess) teaches male skills to a man, when we would expect him to master them already through his own gender: is the author being ironic, once again? For sure, the idea of teaching bravery to women is drawing on classical tradition; what might be new here is the implication that women at this time might choose whether or not to learn such virtues, with consequences for their own gender awareness. I wonder whether such gender awareness or unawareness might reflect different Christian lifestyles—more or less radical—chosen by women in Late Antiquity.

Aphrodite's attack on Athena raises questions and can be seen as a debate regarding femininity and the skills required to be a woman. The rape of Aura in book 48 of *Dionysiaca* has been interpreted as a reflection of certain early Christian literature concerning female monks/martyrs, who rejected sexuality and motherhood in favor of a chaste existence.[15] Aura's fierce rejection

14 Xen. *Symp.* 2.12.
15 Hadjittofi 2008, 124–131.

of sexuality and motherhood could reflect a Late Antique literary tendency to deprive women of their reproductive role and thus turn them into males. With her androgynous and boyish body, Aura exemplifies this process of "masculinization," in clear contrast with the womanly body of Artemis, whom she insults at *Dion.* 48.361–369. In Aura's eyes, Artemis' body is curvy and her breasts look like those of a breastfeeding mother: perhaps the portrayal of this type of woman reflects the influence of a more moderate Christian literature that allowed motherhood. The main accusation directed at Artemis by Aura focuses on the breasts: Artemis's are soft and womanly, and seem to spray milk, while Aura has breasts that do not yield milk. Moreover, when Aura gives birth to the twins, she still refuses to breastfeed them, so much so that a panther will suckle them, and Athena—the least motherly woman—will end up nursing the newborns (but her breast milk is impure at *Dion.* 48.955–957), suggesting, as noted by Hadjittofi, that lactation is acceptable only when transposed into a virgin body.[16] In fact, Athena is defined as ἀντιάνειρα ("equal to a man") at *Rapt.* 171, just as Aura is κούρη ἀντιάνειρα at *Dion.* 48.248: the shared epithet suggests that their strength is equal to (or antagonizing like an up-to-the-challenge rival) that of a man, a strength that provides the main argument for Aura to claim her superiority to Artemis at *Dion.* 48.361–369. The epithet ἀντιάνειρα, in fact, is traditionally associated with the virile strength of the Amazons in the *Iliad*;[17] Nonnus then employs it to describe Aura, who refuses to act like a woman, and then Colluthus transfers it to Athena.

Colluthus may be responding to Nonnus here, presenting an alternative model of femininity: he depicts an Aphrodite who, in contrast to Athena and Aura's masculine figure, is extremely proud of her breasts, and he emphasizes this by reiterating the goddess' lack of shame: οὐκ ᾐδέσσατο Κύπρις ("Cypris had no shame", *Rapt.* 156) and οὐκ ἐμνήσατο μαζῶν ("she did not mind her breasts", *Rapt.* 158). Emphasis is placed on the physicality of femininity and motherhood: labor and breastfeeding are visualized; Aphrodite's breasts (*Rapt.* 155–156) are exposed, and juxtaposed to Athena's bronze breastplate (*Rapt.* 184); sexuality is displayed and merchandized as a commodity. Furthermore, by exaggerating Aphrodite's femininity through her appearance at the contest—bare-chested—and by presenting her specifically as a mother and a nurse accompanied by the Loves, Colluthus perhaps means to reflect the Christian view that allowed conjugal sex as the only sexual behavior free from the erotic force represented by Aphrodite and aimed at reproduction and motherhood.

16 See Lightfoot 1998, 294 and 305 for connections with the Orphic poems, where Demeter does not breastfeed Persephone (the result of her rape by Zeus) either (*Orph.* Fr. 58 K).

17 Hom. *Il.* 3.189 and 6.186; see Hadjittofi 2008, 125.

Paris and Helen's extra-conjugal affair does not fit into this view, of course; however, as suggested above in relation to Helen's departure from her family home, I would argue that Colluthus invests in this narrative because it allows him to also expose the consequences of straying from the type of family he is endorsing (i.e. a moderate Christian family in which conjugal sex is allowed for the purposes of procreation). Readers are constantly reminded of the grief and the deaths caused by the war of Troy,[18] to feel reassured in their evaluation of the adultery. Within the literary production of the church fathers, particularly between the fourth and the sixth centuries, the subject of virginity claims its own special place, deserving specific treatises and orations by Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, and John Chrysostom. This topic understandably occupied a prime position in the list of concerns of the Christian authors, since it was a lifestyle choice made at an early age and implied fundamental consequences for the Christian community, such as the number of potential adepts and the spread of evangelization, by means of cults such as that of Thekla for instance. Ultimately, virginity sat at the core of the reproduction debate, and Paul and his followers set out to establish the Christian dogma on how the faithful were to behave. Especially for the purpose of the growth of the new Christian community, the first enemy that the Christian Fathers had to fight were the female pagan deities in charge of reproduction and birth rituals (such as Aphrodite and Eileithyia), as they controlled the young females and their children in the key stages of their early life, when long-lasting choices of lifestyle were being made. Conceptually, the complete shattering of the female divinities advocated by Paul is justified by his attempt to replace the (pagan) association of sexuality with pleasure with the Christian association of sexuality with procreation. What had to be uprooted was the *aphrodisia*, the pleasure that came with sex, the very attribute of Aphrodite, as this was now closely connected with evil; whenever access to sex was not completely banned (such as in the prescriptive writings of Clement), it was allowed for the sole purpose of procreation of children to be raised as Christians, and, of course, the pleasure element was to be avoided from these instances, too.[19]

With his interpretation of the Pentateuch, Paul (followed later by Tatian and others) urged the Christian faithful to completely abstain from sex in their lives, as this was seen as the only way to eradicate pleasure, and any association with Aphrodite. Gregory of Nazianzus, whose work was certainly known to Nonnus, devoted his *Oration* 37 to virginity; he re-elaborates Paul's teachings to offer a

18 *Rapt.* 10, 60, 169.

19 A comprehensive discussion of the views and interpretations of the Pentateuch by the church fathers is included in Gaca 2003, 235–239; see also Gaca 2007, 2014.

longer-term conceptual framework that welcomes the God-given offering of Christian offspring from a "honorable" marriage, i.e., one in which vice and matter do not belong. Gregory also undoes Paul's hierarchy (in which virginity stood as the highest Good) and puts wives and virgins on the same level, as they both serve a purpose in God's Kingdom, and as mothers are necessary for the mere existence of Christians, including virgins.[20] Gregory of Nyssa's definition of virginity is equally one of spiritual purity and detachment from the temptations of the flesh and matter in general, and this virginity, seen as a return to innocence, is advocated as the preferred path to becoming closer to God.[21] Physical abstinence from the demands of the body is devalued as not representative of the ultimate goal for a Christian; however, it is a useful and desirable step in the process of achieving spiritual purity. Gregory recognizes the challenges and pains associated with marriage, and he praises a marriage that strives to counterbalance its secular ties with spiritual aspirations—by means of prayers—as honorable and useful to reach spiritual virginity.[22] This last concept of marriage status is furthered by John Chrysostom, who remained preoccupied with virginity throughout his life; he grants equality of status to unmarried and married Christians; he acknowledges the honorability of both lifestyle choices.[23] For John, virginity is a choice that liberates men and women from the stress and challenges associated with marriage (which he also, like Gregory of Nyssa, acknowledges), and allows them to devote their energies completely to becoming closer to God, while also gaining a more dignified status within society; such closeness to the Lord does not increase, he says, with physical abstinence from the temptations of the flesh, but with spiritual purity, reflected by one's ability to control one's desires.[24] It is precisely this control that must be mastered by a Christian, and therefore, if one recognizes his/her own limits in this regard, they should marry, John says, in order to protect themselves from the immoral risks that stand outside the conjugal boundaries; consequently, the sexual acts that are consumed within a marriage are cleared from the sinful guilt that had previously been associated with them, and now emerge as honorable and legitimate acts.[25]

Let us now return to Aura and Aphrodite to consider how these portraits may have been received by the audience of the time. The Late Antiquity audience

20 Greg. Naz. *Or*. 37.7–10, in Schaff and Wace 1999b.
21 Greg. Nyss. *Virg*. 1–2, in Schaff and Wace 1999a.
22 Greg. Nyss. *Virg*. 8, in Schaff and Wace 1999a.
23 Jo. Chrys. *Virg*. 8–10, in Grillet and Musurillo 1966.
24 Jo. Chrys. *Virg*. 19 and 25, in Grillet and Musurillo 1966; see also Mutter 1996, 24.
25 Jo. Chrys. *Coloss*. 12, in Schaff 1994; *Matth*., 17 in Schaff 1991. See also Mutter 1996, 7.

played an active role in the contexts of both read texts and publicly recited works. Their awareness of prior tradition (literary and artistic) meant that authors often engaged with them by relying on their knowledge of prior and contemporary textual and/or visual sources to decode refined allusions; vice versa, the expectations of readers were taken into account by authors, who felt the urge to fulfill the demands of an educated Late Antique audience.[26] On the one hand, the readers of Late Antique epic could easily place the Nonnian heroines within that tradition, which Nonnus derived from Ovid, of the παρθένοι φυγόδεμνοι, the virgin maidens that dedicated themselves to worship and preservation of their virginity, avoiding sexual activity at all costs.[27] On the other hand, readers also lived in a heavily Christianized environment and would have been aware of the Christian conceptual framework on sexuality, reproduction, motherhood, and marriage, which was being promoted at the time, in the shape of views such as those I have briefly surveyed above. These two elements, which do not contradict each other, but, on the contrary, contribute to strengthening each other, make, in my opinion, a recipe for success of characters such as Aura, Chalcomede, and Nicaea in Nonnus, and Athena in Colluthus, as they lend themselves to be interpreted as both the ideal continuators of a conventional pagan literary tradition, and as reflecting several features of the martyrs, to different extents, in which chastity was fully (or partially) reflected.[28]

In parallel, evidence from contemporary art that featured pagan iconography and was targeted to a Christian recipient is abundant.[29] One example shall suffice: the Projecta Casket, dating to around 380, is a silver and gold gilded casket that was offered as a wedding gift to a fourth-century inter-religious couple. The iconography of the casket includes conventional pagan motifs such as Venus and the hippocampi, but the dedicatory inscription on the lid reads *Secunde et Projecta vivatis in Christo* ("Secundus and Projecta, may you live in Christ"). The case of the Projecta casket may be seen as an artistic equivalent of Claudian's *Epithalamion* to Christian emperor Honorius and his wife Maria (daughter of Stilicho), in which the bride is compared to Venus for her beauty. In both cases, then, the use of the "pagan" iconographic motif of

26 See Cadau 2015, e.g., 7, 52, and 176 for a discussion of such dynamics in Colluthus.

27 For a study on the virginity of the bacchants in Nonnus in particular see Gerlaud 2005, especially 251–253; for Nonnus' dependence on Ovid for this topos see D' Ippolito 1964, 86–114.

28 For the coexistence of Christian and pagan cultures, see, e.g., Gerlaud 2005, 256–257.

29 Cadau 2015, 79, 102; Papagiannaki 2010, 330–346; Gerlaud 2005, 256 n. 4; Buono 1987, 85–95.

Aphrodite/Venus was obviously considered legitimate and appropriate enough even for a Christian audience/recipient; what is suggested here is that one may read the epic characterization of female heroines of this period in a similar way, appreciating the literary context of the audience/readership, which was at the same time informed by prior (pagan) tradition and exposed to contemporary (Christian) material and culture endorsing sexual ethics of various types.

Aura and Aphrodite may thus reflect two contrasting models of femininity, based on different boundaries of sexuality set by early Christian figures: for Tatian, for instance, sexuality cannot be free from pleasure, and therefore he, like Paul, advocates complete sexual renunciation for all Christians, while Clement allows sexuality only for reproductive purposes within a Christian marriage. Various degrees of radicalism see women reject sexuality and motherhood completely, such as Aura, who leads a lifestyle similar to that of the martyr Perpetua, who is empowered by her masculinization and is prepared to die rather than to become a mother (as martyr Felicitas does);[30] women in the middle, who endured sexuality to produce one single child; and the Christian woman of Clement, represented by Colluthus' Aphrodite, who embraces sexuality and motherhood. One question that remains unexplored is whether this motherly figure reflects a Christian woman or not, since the sexual worship and idolatry embodied by Aphrodite were the crucial enemy to be abolished by early Christian Fathers, Paul and Tatian in primis; perhaps further research will shed light on how this model fits in with contemporary Christian literature.

It is unclear whether Nonnus is creating a (or a number of) character(s) that simply reflect(s) certain Christian views of women rejecting their femininity, or whether he is criticizing such a view, showing the terrible consequences to be expected by those who do not abide by the rules. This episode, like the whole epic, lends itself to be read in many ways, regardless of the particular Christian viewpoint that is followed by the reader. It seems as if Nonnus' impossible (?) ideal of woman might be a motherly virgin (Mary), a woman who has kept her virginity and still is a mother in the active sense, i.e., is breastfeeding. Is this model so impossible, though? Perhaps he had in mind a woman who actively fulfills her role as wife and mother (= procreator), but whose sexuality is strictly limited by the bonds of marriage; perhaps he had more than one woman in mind, given the diversity of Christian ethics that were current at the time.

30 See Gerlaud 2005, 257 n. 4 for the similarities between Perpetua's and Nonnus' Chalcomede's virility.

Interpreting gender in Late Antique epic also leads to a better understanding of how characters were forged at this time. Models of early Christian views are employed to mold behaviors and bodily descriptions, in line with the overall re-elaboration of pagan deities within the Christian context, often for Christian purposes, of course, promoting this or that lifestyle.

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CHAPTER 13

Nonnus' Europa and Cadmus: Re-configuring Masculinity in the *Dionysiaca*

Fotini Hadjittofi

In the admittedly few discussions of gender in the *Dionysiaca*, an element that is becoming increasingly prominent is that of gender reversal: the feminization of men and, conversely, the masculinization of women (most notably in the cases of Nicaea, Aura, Pallene, and, as I have argued elsewhere, Chalcomede[1]). What is more frequently remarked upon in this context is the inversion of gendered physical and behavioral *characteristics*: the effeminate looks and cowardice of the men (among them, of course, Dionysus[2]), and—on the flip side—the masculine physique of the women and their rejection of femininity and motherhood.[3] This paper asks if, *beyond* the reversal of these characteristics, the *Dionysiaca* also inverts traditional gender norms and hierarchies, whereby control, reason, power, and agency are associated with manliness and classified as superior, and whereby the unmanly man can only be an object of derision.[4] My discussion will take as case studies some brief passages from the episodes of Europa and Cadmus in books 1–2,[5] suggesting that the inversion of gender norms here, at the beginning of the poem, is programmatic for the rest of the epic.

1 Hadjittofi 2014. For recent overviews of the same episode with emphasis on the anonymous Indian soldier's necrophiliac desire in relation to the poem's Christian context see Accorinti 2015 and Goldhill 2020, 136–146.

2 On Dionysus' effeminate looks and clothes, see Miguélez–Cavero 2009, 564–566.

3 See Hadjittofi 2008; cf. chapters by Lefteratou and Cadau in this volume.

4 As Goldhill says, in the world of the Second Sophistic, "despite any flirt with the manliness of women, the womanliness of men is thinkable only as an insult" (1995, 160). This is not to deny, of course, that the masculinity of the novels' heroes, and especially that of Achilles Tatius' Clitophon, is sometimes compromised; cf. Brethes 2012 and Jones 2012. My discussion will suggest that Nonnus goes beyond this novelistic "misperformance" of masculinity (as Jones 2012 terms it).

5 Cadmus' portrayal as an effeminate boy by Peisinoe in the Harmonia episode will not be analyzed in this chapter, although it is definitely relevant; some connections with it will be made later on.

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The narrative proper of the *Dionysiaca* begins as follows, at 1.45:[6]

ἀλλά, θεά, μαστῆρος ἀλήμονος ἄρχεο Κάδμου.
Σιδονίης ποτὲ ταῦρος ἐπ᾽ ἠόνος ὑψίκερως Ζεὺς
ἱμερόεν μύκημα νόθῳ μυκήσατο λαιμῷ
καὶ γλυκὺν εἶχε μύωπα. μετοχμάζων δὲ γυναῖκα,
κυκλώσας παλάμας περὶ γαστέρα δίζυγι δεσμῷ,
βαιὸς Ἔρως κούφιζε· καὶ ἐγγύθεν ὑγροπόρος βοῦς
κυρτὸν ὑποστορέσας λοφιὴν ἐπιβήτορι κούρῃ,
δόχμιος ὀκλάζων, κεχαλασμένα νῶτα τιταίνων,
Εὐρώπην ἀνάειρε.

Then come now, Goddess, begin with the long search and the travels of Cadmos. Once on the Sidonian beach Zeus as a high-horned bull lowed an amorous bellow with his changeling throat, and was stung by a sweet gadfly; little Eros heaved up a woman, with his two arms encircling her middle. And while he lifted her, at his side the sea-faring bull curved his neck downwards, spread under the girl to mount, sinking sideways on his knees, and stretching his back submissive, he raised up Europa.

The invocation to the Muse, asking her to tell of Cadmus' long travels, is immediately followed by the sudden appearance of Zeus transformed into a bull on the beach of Sidon, as Eros lifts up a girl (only identified as Europa in line 53) onto his back.[7] In these lines, Nonnus' reader is already introduced to the dangerous inversion of gender power dynamics, for which *eros* will be responsible throughout the epic. Zeus' transformation into an animal is in its own right ridiculous and demeaning,[8] as Hera's sarcastic speech will later point out. This

6 Translations of the *Dionysiaca* are adapted from Rouse 1940. Translations of other texts are my own.

7 On the abruptness of connections between individual passages in the poem as a whole, and especially within the Europa episode, see Kuhlmann 2012, 486–487.

8 Cf. Miguélez-Cavero 2009, 573, who further compares Nonnus to Lucian, "whose characters several times deride Zeus and feel ashamed for his demeaning metamorphoses." In Hadjittofi 2020 I argue that Nonnus creates a "bridge" between the last episode narrated in book 21 of the *Paraphrase* (Jesus commanding Peter to become a shepherd to his flock) and the first episode of the *Dionysiaca* here. While both epics portray the paradoxical shepherding of beings that are not truly animals, the similarity seems to highlight the superiority of the Christian God, who is in control and instructing his disciple, in contrast to the metamorphosed Zeus who is at the mercy of a violent, irrational force. Spanoudakis 2016, 622 has suggested another "bridge" between the end of the *Dionysiaca* and the beginning of the *Paraphrase*.

speech is delivered in the second installment of the Europa episode (lines 326–343) and features scornful warnings for Zeus, such as: "a farmer could catch you and set you to work in the fields." But even in these very first verses, it seems that we are invited to see Zeus as passive and ineffectual. A closer look at verses 46–50, the first five lines of the narrative, reveals Zeus-the-bull as a character who, for someone abducting a woman, is not particularly active: all he does is emit an amorous bellow (line 47) and have a sweet gadfly (line 48). At the end of line 48 we have a participle, μετοχμάζων δὲ γυναῖκα ("carrying a woman"), for which the subject could very well be Zeus, as he is the only named character up to this point, and appears in the nominative two lines above. The following verse, however, introduces another participle, κυκλώσας παλάμας περὶ γαστέρα, that is, literally "making a circle around her waist with his palms," which obviously does not make any sense for a palm-less bull. All is explained in line 50, where we realize that the subject of the two participles, and the one doing all the "heavy lifting" in the narrative so far, is "little Eros" (βαιὸς Ἔρως)—in fact, a character who appears frequently in literary as well as visual representations of the abduction of Europa, but had not been mentioned thus far in this narrative.[9] Apart from surprising the educated readers through this mythological riddle,[10] Nonnus' poem is already asking them to consider who is responsible for the rape, who is actually abducting (the still unnamed) Europa, and, ultimately, who is in charge.[11]

The bull appears in the nominative again by the end of line 50, and this time he *will* get to lift Europa himself by the end of the clause in line 53 (Εὐρώπην ἀνάειρε), but the way this happens is significant: line 51 says he was "curving his back downwards, spread under the girl to mount" (κυρτὸν ὑποστορέσας λοφιὴν ἐπιβήτορι κούρῃ),[12] and then in line 52 he was "sinking sideways on his knees, and stretching his back submissive." Rouse's translation of κεχαλασμένα νῶτα

9 On the imagery of Cupid(s) flying about Europa and the bull, see Vian 1976, 139 n. 79–83.

10 On Nonnus creating riddles for his readers (e.g., by withholding names), see Frangoulis 2014, 172. Cf. Shorrock 2018, 375, who notes that "the abduction of Europa has already taken place before the reader has even been able to confirm her identity."

11 Morales suggests that Colluthus' *Abduction of Helen* poses similar questions, and convincingly argues that "in the late empire, rape and abduction—and the woman's complicity in these crimes—were very much a collective anxiety" (2016, 84). In the following two paragraphs I rework and expand on material I presented in Hadjittofi 2016a.

12 Nonnus takes the participle ὑποστορέσας from Moschus (v. 104), where, as Hopkinson 1988, 211 n. ad loc. points out, it is "suggestive, because commonly used of beds." In Moschus, however, the focalizer is Europa: it is she who sees the bull-back as a bed, hinting at her own sexual awakening. In Nonnus there is no such awakening for Europa: it is Zeus or the narrator (or both) who see the bull-back as bed.

as "submissive back" (instead of, literally, "slackened" or "lowered") captures the general passivity and submissiveness of the Zeus-bull, which prefigures the attitude of many male lovers in the *Dionysiaca*, often becoming "slack" or "weak" under the effects of *eros*.[13] So, while Zeus-the-bull sinks down, bends and lowers his back, Europa is the one doing the mounting. The word ἐπιβήτωρ, which in line 51 modifies κούρῃ, is naturally masculine and, as a noun, can denote a male animal, such as a bull (as it does, e.g., in Theocritus 25.128); but even when used as an adjective, as it is by Nonnus, it can have the metaphorical meaning of "master of a thing."[14] Europa is, then, Zeus' master; in a way, she is also a bull. Admittedly, ἐπιβήτωρ is one of Nonnus' *Lieblingsworten*: ἐπιβήτορι παλμῷ is a frequent Nonnian formula, always occupying the end of the line, but in this verse we have the very first appearance of the word in the epic and, more importantly, it is the only occurrence of a "mounting girl," making it more likely that the inherent contrast between the concepts of "actively mounting" and "girl" is meant to be felt.[15] At the same time, if we imagine the bull as a ship, as the previous verse with the adjective ὑγροπόρος perhaps invites us to, then ἐπιβήτωρ can evoke yet another metaphorical meaning: that of someone on board a ship,[16] a metaphor that will be used for Europa just a few verses below. In nautical contexts, ἐπιβήτωρ comes to approximate the phonetically similar ἐπιβάτης, which is defined as a passenger (especially merchant officer or soldier) on board a ship. The verbs associated with these two nouns, ἐπιβαίνω and ἐπιβατεύω, both mean "mount," and the latter, which is closely linked with riding ships, often appears in obscene jokes, applying to the partner who is on top and therefore in control.[17] Whether we picture Zeus as a mounted, submissive bull or a ship ridden by an ἐπιβάτης, it seems that, at least thus far, he is far from being in control.

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13 In Morrheus' case, even his weapons grow slack; see 34.75 ἐμὴ θηλύνεται αἰχμή.

14 See LSJ s.v. ἐπιβήτωρ.

15 For ἐπιβήτορι παλμῷ see 4.367, 20.113, 30.82, 37.256, 41.8, 41.191, and 45.320. ἐπιβήτορα δίφρων / θώκων / εὐνῆς also appear more than once. It is noteworthy that, when Ate tries to convince Ampelus to ride the bull, she uses the *exemplum* of Europa, who "*even though she was a female*, a young girl, she had a ride on bull-back" (11.152–153 ἐπεὶ *καὶ θῆλυς ἐοῦσα* / παρθένος Εὐρώπη βοέων ἐπεβήσατο νώτων); the inherent contrast between being a female and "mounting" is highlighted once again.

16 LSJ s.v. ἐπιβήτωρ provides as an example πάντα νεὼς ἐπιβήτορα λαόν from an epigram by Antipater in *AP* 7.498.3.

17 See, e.g., Ar. *Ra.* 48 ἐπεβάτευον Κλεισθένει. The verb ἐπιβαίνω is used in a similar way in *AP* 9.415.7–8, where a prostitute, portraying herself as a ship, invites sailors to "board" her (ναυτίλοι, ἀλλ᾽ ἄγε πάντες ἐμῆς ἐπιβαίνετε πρύμνης / θαρραλέως, πολλοὺς οἶδα φέρειν ἐρέτας).

After this introductory passage we have a 40-line *ekphrasis* (v. 53–90) of Europa carried across the sea, echoing the opening scene of Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon*.[18] Nonnus' *ekphrasis* takes up and elaborates on the issues of power and control that are seminally present in Achilles Tatius.[19] Near the end of his *ekphrasis*, for example, Nonnus uses the traditional imagery of Cupid driving the Zeus-bull with Europa on his back, but re-interprets it to highlight Zeus' humiliation: "his drover Eros flogged the servile neck with his charmed girdle" (v. 80 βουκόλος αὐχένα δοῦλον Ἔρως ἐπεμάστιε κεστῷ).[20] This is possibly a variation on the end of Achilles Tatius' *ekphrasis*, where Eros turns around and smiles at Zeus, "as though mocking him" for becoming a bull on his account.[21] Immediately after this, the narrator of Achilles Tatius exclaims, "How a baby rules over heaven, earth, and sea!"[22] which, while stressing the omnipotence of sexual desire and undermining the authority of Zeus, does not exactly bring the Supreme God down to the level of a flogged slave.[23] In these very similar programmatic passages, then, Achilles Tatius signals his attitude of parody and irony,[24] whereas Nonnus concentrates on the slavishness, the lack of control and dignity, which Eros is able to inflict on (predominantly) men, and which will be a recurrent theme throughout the epic; Morrheus, for example, will bend to Dionysus a neck that is, like that of Zeus, a slave to Eros (33.257 αὐχένα δοῦλον Ἔρωτος ὑποκλίνων Διονύσῳ).

Nonnus' imagery and vocabulary in the *ekphrasis* highlights, in an almost obsessive manner, the inversion of gender roles and hierarchies, as well as the

18 The allusion to Achilles Tatius probably begins, in fact, already at line 46, where Nonnus' Σιδονίης … ἐπ' ἠόνος is reminiscent of Achilles' Σιδῶνος ἡ γῆ (1.1.2). See Gigli Piccardi 2003, 128 n. 46, followed by Frangoulis 2014, 47. On the whole episode of Europa in Nonnus as an imitation of (or response to) Achilles Tatius, see Frangoulis 2014, 169–178.

19 Cf. Miguélez–Cavero 2016, 553, who briefly points out that Nonnus draws on Achilles Tatius' "ambivalent presentation of Europa as victim of rape and acquiescent kidnappee."

20 Whitmarsh 2019 argues that the violent scenes involving cowherds in Imperial Greek literature (including in Achilles Tatius and Nonnus) can be attributed in part to awareness of the Nile-Delta outlaws known as βουκόλοι and in part to the increased urbanisation of the elites that promoted an attitude of both contempt and fascination towards cowherding and other such forms of labor. As Whitmarsh acknowledges, however, Nonnus frequently couples seduction or desire with violence, and not just in this episode.

21 1.1.13 ὑπεμειδία, ὥσπερ αὐτοῦ καταγελῶν, ὅτι δι' αὐτὸν γέγονε βοῦς.

22 1.2.1 "οἷον," εἶπον, "ἄρχει βρέφος οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης."

23 The emphasis, rather, seems to be on the (clichéd) paradox of having the Supreme God vanquished by love. Similarly, in Moschus' *Europa*, Zeus' mind was "overpowered by the unforeseen arrows of Aphrodite, who is the only one able to subdue even Zeus" (v. 75–76 θυμὸν ἀνωΐστοισιν *ὑποδμηθεὶς* βελέεσσι / Κύπριδος, ἣ μούνη δύναται καὶ Ζῆνα *δαμάσσαι*).

24 On Achilles Tatius' "parodic treatment of his novelistic and classical tradition" and how it is programmatically announced in this passage, see Chew 2000, 61.

paradoxical passivity of *both* characters. Europa trembles with fear (v. 56 δείματι παλλομένη) as she is "raised up" or "snatched" (v. 63 ἀειρομένην δὲ γυναῖκα), but then she is also said to be holding "the bull's horn as steering oar," that is, as if she was driving the Zeus-ship, with the personified Desire as seaman (v. 68 πηδάλιον κέρας ἔσχε, καὶ Ἵμερος ἔπλετο ναύτης). The κέρας obviously carries obscene connotations;[25] in Moschus' titillating narrative, Europa holds on to the bull's long horn (v. 126 ἔχεν ταύρου δολιχὸν κέρας), but she is not said to be using it to control the course of Zeus. Nonnus' poem, on the contrary, is interested in more than sexual titillation at this point: it asks us to consider questions such as, "if Europa is the one holding the steering oar of the Zeus-ship, does that mean she is in control of (or, at least, complicit in) her own abduction?" The first half of the verse implies this kind of empowerment, but the second half appears to negate it: we could take the phrase Ἵμερος ἔπλετο ναύτης as simply "Desire became a passenger on the ship," but, given the ambivalence that will be expressed below regarding Europa's agency, it is much likelier that "Desire" is meant to be pictured as an active sailor, co-driving the Zeus-ship. Whichever interpretation we might choose though, the very fact that these questions are suggested (and that they are very difficult to answer) is itself significant.

The idea that Europa is actively riding and controlling the course of Zeus by grasping his horn could, in fact, have been suggested to Nonnus by Achilles Tatius' *ekphrasis*, where a strangely calm, and apparently complicit, Europa "held onto the horn with her left hand, like a rider (ἡνίοχος) onto the rein."[26] Later on in his *ekphrasis*, Nonnus will also present Europa as the rider of Zeus, although it is perhaps significant that in Achilles this is presented as a neutral simile, whereas in Nonnus it is focalized through "unmothered" Athena, who is ashamed to see Zeus ridden (markedly, at the end of the verse) by a woman in lines 83–85, αἰδομένη δὲ / παρθενίην πόρφυρε παρηΐδα Παλλὰς ἀμήτωρ / ἡνίοχον Κρονίωνος ὀπιπεύουσα γυναῖκα. As it has already been pointed out, this equestrian metaphor is a clear reference to a sexual position,[27] which explains Athena's shame. It is, nevertheless, interesting that Nonnus chooses to have

25 See Pretagostini 1984.

26 Ach. Tat. 1.1.10 τῇ λαιᾷ τοῦ κέρως ἐχομένη, ὥσπερ ἡνίοχος χαλινοῦ. On Europa's calmness and complicity, and how it foreshadows Leucippe's lax attitude toward her virginity, see Bartsch 1989, 54; Morales 2004, 211.

27 See Hollis 1994, 53–54. As Murgatroyd 1995, 12 notes, the nautical and equestrian metaphors for sex often intersect, as they do in this passage. For another example, see Ar. *Lys.* 674–679, where the women are described first as aggressive, oversexed sailors and then as experienced horsemen or Amazons.

Athena, the female champion of patriarchy, look at the scene and find it disturbing;[28] what the syntax suggests is that it is not only the overt eroticism that shocks her, but also its skewed power dynamics: that a woman is (or appears to be) in charge of Zeus.

Finally, the last two verses of the *ekphrasis* crystallize the paradoxical position of Europa as both the victim of the abduction and the one apparently driving the Zeus-ship: "Thus a girl steered the bull's unboisterous passage, herself at once both pilot and cargo" (v. 89–90 καὶ βοὸς ἀφλοίσβοιο κυβερνήτειρα πορείης / κούρη φόρτος ἔην καὶ ναυτίλος). Europa is simultaneously the passive, and slightly ridiculous, "cargo" (φόρτος) of the bull imagined as ship and the one who steers that very same ship. The comical effect of φόρτος depends on *both* its other, mostly negative, meanings ("burden," "heavy load," or even "rubbish"[29]) *and* its literary history: in the *Batrachomyomachia*, the mouse, ferried across the lake by the frogking, is compared to Europa carried on the bull's back as the "cargo of love" (v. 78 φόρτον ἔρωτος).[30] Two late-fifth- or early-sixth-century *epyllia* on the abduction of (a willing) Helen, one in Greek, by Colluthus—an imitator of Nonnus—and one in Latin, by Dracontius, both call Helen, at the moment she is carried away from Sparta, Paris' (heavy) "load" or "cargo."[31] Dracontius, in fact, compares Helen, under whose weight Paris is staggering, to Europa "weighing down the heavenly back" of the Zeus-bull.[32] These two *epyllia* work within a very long literary tradition that debated whether or not Helen was responsible for her abduction and, consequently, the war that followed it.[33]

Europa's complicity in her rape was not as fiercely debated as that of Helen, although Moschus' poem and Horace's *Ode* 3.27 do, in fact, raise questions regarding Europa's precise role in her abduction.[34] Nonnus' poem, like the

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28 Athena is Nonnus' own addition to the list of divine spectators who witness Europa's abduction in Moschus (Nereids, Poseidon, Tritons) and also appear here. See Kuhlmann 2012, 487.

29 Cadau 2015, 39 and 261 highlights these meanings in relation to Colluthus' use of φόρτος for Helen (as Paris' "cargo") at line 327.

30 Nonnus will later use the conjunction φόρτον ἔρωτος or φόρτον ἐρώτων on three occasions: twice for Harmonia (3.116 and 4.118) and once for Ampelus (10.364).

31 For Colluthus, see above, n. 29; for Dracontius see *Romulea* 8.565 *qui gratum portabat onus*.

32 See v. 561 *Agenoriam caelestia colla grauantem*. Morales 2016, 74 suggests that the "scene is played for laughs," and that this poet must be expanding upon Menelaus' infamous question to Hecuba (who had warned him not to take Helen on board) whether Helen is now heavier than before (at E. *Tr.* 1050).

33 See Cadau 2015, 255–262; Morales 2016, 69.

34 While Moschus' Europa is typically perceived to be complicit, Horace's heroine has for a

ekphrasis of Achilles Tatius, does not even provide us with a narrative for how she ended up on the bull's back. The question of Europa's complicity appears to interest Nonnus not so much for Europa's sake (there is no intent to create a realistic, psychological portrait of the heroine), but for the effects her initiative or current position of control have on Zeus' masculinity.[35] Even if Europa is only Zeus' "cargo" or "heavy load," his φόρτος, does that not make him a (ridiculous) beast of burden?[36] And what does it mean for him to have a woman as his (naturally gendered masculine) ναυτίλος or his κυβερνήτειρα ("helmswoman"), a word that is in itself a paradox?[37] My view is that by consistently attributing agency and control directly to Europa, where Eros could have easily been the "helmsman," as he is elsewhere,[38] these early verses in Nonnus' poem anticipate and encapsulate the deep fear expressed in the rest of the epic regarding the inversion of gender norms and hierarchies, and the loss of power experienced by the man in love, for whom even accomplishing his desires implies a certain degree of effeminacy.

It is no wonder, then, that when Zeus comes to request Cadmus' help in defeating Typhoeus, he also asks Eros "the all-vanquisher" (1.404 πανδαμάτωρ) to come to their aid and make Typhoeus experience the same destructive passion for Cadmus' song that he himself had felt for Europa.[39] Zeus, at this point,

long time been considered an enigma. I provide a new reading of these two poems based on their relationship to a fragment by Plato Comicus in Hadjittofi 2019.

35 As Paschalis 2018, 31 perceptively notes, in Nonnus the focus is on the bull, whereas in Moschus it was on Europa.

36 Frangoulis 2014, 176 maintains that κυβερνήτειρα and ναυτίλος describe Europa's apparent situation, as seen by external observers, whereas φόρτος reflects her real status. Europa may indeed be, "in reality" only a "cargo" (her brief speech will later express how helpless she feels, and she is repeatedly objectified, as a number of different characters gaze at the scene and make a sexualized spectacle out of her), but Nonnus' paradoxical gendering of the maiden as masculine and in control is not only a false appearance: it is meant to tell us something about Zeus' jeopardized masculinity.

37 The word is extremely rare; outside of Nonnus, it only appears in *Orph.H.* 10.3 and an epigram by Palladas (*AP* 10.65.3).

38 Eros is famously described as a helmsman in Agathon's hymn to the god at Pl. *Smp.* 197d–e ἐν πόνῳ, ἐν φόβῳ, ἐν πόθῳ, ἐν λόγῳ κυβερνήτης ("our helmsman in toil, in fear, in desire, in discourse"). Nonnus' near contemporary, Procopius of Gaza, briefly summarizes Europa's abduction in his *Descriptio imaginis* (1.4–5) βοῦς Εὐρώπῃ δοκεῖ καὶ νήχεται θάλασσαν ὑπ᾽ Ἔρωτος κυβερνώμενος ("he appears as a bull to Europa, and swims across the sea steered by Eros").

39 See v. 406–407: Καδμείης δ᾽ ἐχέτω φρενοθελγέος οἶστρον ἀοιδῆς, / ὅσσον ἐγὼ πόθον ἔσχον ἐς Εὐρώπης ὑμεναίους ("may he have madness from the mind-bewitching tune of Cadmos, as much as I had passion for Europa's embrace!"). Close to the end of the Typhoeus episode, Zeus mocks the monster, telling him to punish Eros, who had bewitched his mind and was

has already shed his bull-guise and deflowered Europa; he has satisfied his desire and is, thus, free from it. Typhoeus will have no means of doing the same, as he will fall in love with "mind-bewitching song" (406 φρενοθελγέος ... ἀοιδῆς). Song, of course, is not a woman, but the narrative makes every effort to present the scene as one of seduction and to figure Cadmus as the embodiment of a female type of allure or bewitchment.[40] Even before beginning his performance, when Cadmus speaks to Typhoeus to ask for the sinews, the terms he uses in order to advertise the charm of his music cast him in the part of a woman, and more specifically (and disturbingly), a sorceress (1.495–499):

καὶ στέφος αὐτοέλικτον, ὁμόζυγον ἥλικι Γαίῃ,
Ὠκεανὸν σπεύδοντα παλινδίνητον ἐρύξω
τὴν αὐτὴν περὶ νύσσαν ἄγειν κυκλούμενον ὕδωρ·
ἀπλανέων δὲ φάλαγγα καὶ ἀντιθέοντας ἀλήτας
στήσω καὶ Φαέθοντα καὶ ἱστοβοῆα Σελήνης.

> I will drag back Oceanos, that coronet self-wreathed about the earth and old as Earth herself, I will make him hasten and bring his stream rolling back upon himself round the same road. I will stay the army of fixed stars, and the racing planets, and Phaëthon, and Selene's carriage-pole.

Cadmus' boasts that he is able to make the ocean stop rolling its waters, and that he can stay all the celestial bodies, elaborate and expand on the description of Medea's magical powers by Argus in book 3 of the *Argonautica*.[41] She can stay the course of rivers; he stops the entire ocean. She checks the stars and the moon; his powers can control "armies of fixed stars," the racing planets, the sun, and Selene's carriage-pole. That these stereotypes of sorcery are to be associated with the female domain (at its worst, and perhaps even most barbaric) can perhaps be better demonstrated by their record in Latin poetry. Dido's sorceress in the *Aeneid* (4.489), Propertius' Acanthis (4.5.11–12), Ovid's

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thus responsible for his defeat (2.602–603 ἀλλὰ δόλῳ θέλξαντα τεὸν νόον ἐλπίδι νίκης / χρυσῷ δῆσον Ἔρωτα μετὰ χρυσῆς Ἀφροδίτης). For Zeus and Typhoeus as "two of a kind," see Hardie 2005, 124.

40 The adjective φρενοθελγής, which qualifies Cadmus' song here and at 2.10, is mainly used in erotic contexts elsewhere in the poem: see, e.g., 4.67, 7.278, 8.175, and 47.427.

41 See lines 532–533 καὶ ποταμοὺς ἵστησιν ἄφαρ κελαδεινὰ ῥέοντας, / ἄστρα τε καὶ μήνης ἱερὰς ἐπέδησε κελεύθους. On these lines, and their reception in Latin literature, see Hunter 1989, 154–155.

Dipsas (*Am.* 1.8.5, 11), and Lucan's Thessalian witches (6.461 ff.) all display these exact same powers over nature.[42]

At the very end of the seduction scene, when Zeus has already got his sinews back, while Typhoeus is still spellbound by the music, and right before the melody falls silent, we have a simile (2.11–19):

> ὡς δ᾽ ὅτε τις Σειρῆνος ἐπίκλοπον ὕμνον ἀκούων
> εἰς μόρον αὐτοκέλευστον ἀώριος εἵλκετο ναύτης,
> θελγόμενος μελέεσσι, καὶ οὐκέτι κῦμα χαράσσων
> γλαυκὸν ἀκυμάντοισιν ὕδωρ λεύκαινεν ἐρετμοῖς,
> ἀλλὰ λιγυφθόγγοιο πεσὼν ἐπὶ δίκτυα Μοίρης
> τέρπετο πηδαλίοιο λελασμένος, ἄστρον ἐάσσας
> Πλειάδος ἑπταπόροιο καὶ ἄντυγα κυκλάδος Ἄρκτου·
> ὣς ὅ γε κερδαλέης δεδονημένος ἄσθμασι μολπῆς
> πηκτίδος ἡδὺ βέλεμνον ἐδέξατο πομπὸν ὀλέθρου.

> As when a sailor hears the Siren's perfidious song, and bewitched by the melody, he is dragged to a self-chosen fate too soon; no longer he cleaves the waves, no longer he whitens the blue water with his oars unwetted now, but falling into the net of melodious Fate, he forgets to steer, quite happy, caring not for the seven starry Pleiades and the Bear's circling course: so the monster, shaken by the breath of that deceitful tune, welcomed the sweet dart of the pipes which was his escort to death.

In this simile, near the beginning of the second book of the *Dionysiaca*, Typhoeus is compared to a sailor who falls victim to the bewitching, deceitful song of a Siren. This is a "reverse simile,"[43] in more than one way: first, and most obviously, it casts Cadmus in the role of a *female* Siren. Second, as a Phoenician, Cadmus is a sailor by definition (we could expect him to be an Odysseus-like

42 It is significant that, when the story of Typhoeus is revisited by Nonnus in 13.474–497, the mortal man to be assisting Zeus is a Lydian magician.

43 Foley 1978 develops this term, and argues that through this type of simile Odysseus emerges as a man who comprehends female consciousness, but never experiences the ultimate reversal from male to female. What we have, at the end of the *Odyssey*, are well-defined spheres for the like-minded husband and wife in Ithaca. Jason is also the subject of a "reverse simile" in Ap.Rh. 4.167–171: holding the Fleece in his hands, he is compared to a maiden who rejoices at catching the glow of the full moon on her robe. Beye 1982, 33 believes that Apollonius "has perverted his hero's natural instincts," by making him display feminine sensitivity. Hunter (1988, 451–452; 1993, 17) on the other hand, associates it with *rites de passage* involving sexual reversal.

figure), but here he is refused his "rightful" role, and ends up playing the part of one of the mythical sailors' worst nightmares. Typhoeus the monster takes the place of Odysseus, or tries to but fails, as numerous allusions to the Homeric Sirens remind us.[44] On the one hand, Nonnus' Cadmus-as-Siren is the logical, if paradoxical, result of pushing the Homeric Odysseus to the extreme: that hero, having listened to the Sirens' song, himself acquired the capacity to enchant with his words.[45] On the other hand, the expansion of Odysseus' heroic identity into the realm of female experience is limited and occasional.[46] The *Odyssey*, as Doherty put it, "elides or circumscribes the voice of "dangerous" female figures while privileging the male voices of its hero and poet/narrator."[47] What is most striking here is that the hero's song coincides with or even becomes itself that "dangerous" female voice.

Furthermore, if we take into account the markedly theatrical context in which Typhoeus' enchantment takes place,[48] with Cadmus disguised as a shepherd (the appropriate stage set, props, and costume were provided by Pan at 1.369–374) and thus being, on some level, a Dionysiac τεχνίτης, an actor, his appearance here as a Siren could evoke yet another nexus of associations: actors, in particular those of the pantomime but not exclusively so, were notoriously considered effeminate, sexually promiscuous, and generally immoral.[49]

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44 Nonnus' θελγόμενος μελέεσσι (v. 13) and λιγυφθόγγοιο (v. 15) recall Homer's λιγυρῇ θέλγουσιν ἀοιδῇ (12.44). Both Typhoeus and Odysseus rejoice in the bewitching song (τερπόμενος *Od.* 12.52, τέρπετο *Dion.* 2.16), but while Odysseus' companions continue to row and "whiten the water" (12.172 λεύκαινον ὕδωρ), Typhoeus-turned-sailor gets so dragged into the melody that he forgets to "whiten the water" (*Dion.* 2.13–14 οὐκέτι … / … ὕδωρ λεύκαινεν), and so meets his doom.

45 See Goldhill 1991, 64–66. On the Homeric Sirens as the "the ultimate (and hauntingly mysterious) emblem of the irresistibility of song," see Halliwell 2011, 48.

46 See Cook 1999, 152–167.

47 Doherty 1995, 60–62; see also 135–139 for an examination of the Sirens in a series of female challenges to the authority of the main narrator.

48 Simon Zuenelli's paper in the conference from which this volume derives interpreted the episode specifically as a mime. I would rather see it as a cross between the mime (with which it shares its humor and burlesque) and the pantomime; the mime's plots were predominantly based on "everyday-life" topics, as opposed to the pantomime's mythological subjects. The *Dionysiaca* includes several descriptions of pantomime performance; see 5.103–107, 19.198–295, and 30.108–123.

49 For the contagious effeminacy of the pantomime dancer, as argued by Crato in Lucian's *On the Dance*, see Schlapbach 2008, 317–319. For the specifically Christian anti-theatrical polemics, see Webb 2009. Cf. Morales 2016, 76–80 on Colluthus' poem as influenced by pantomime and how that reflects on Paris' gender identity. It is probably not a coincidence that Colluthus' Paris is modeled on Nonnus' Cadmus; see Cadau 2015, 49–60, 162, 186.

The very genre of the pantomime is figured as a Siren by its detractor, Crato, in Lucian's *On the Dance*: even worse than the Homeric Sirens, who only ensnared men through the ears (i.e., by singing), pantomimes enslave their spectators "even through the eyes."[50] Their assault on the audience through both hearing and seeing is especially relevant for Cadmus and his seductive performance. The markedly visual and erotic element in Cadmus' defeat of Typhoeus is most prominent in the simile that precedes this one (and will be examined below), but it is important to note that the thread is maintained throughout. Here, at the beginning of book 2, Typhoeus has surrendered control, forgetting to "steer" his ship (16 πηδαλίοιο λελασμένος), somewhat like Zeus, who, at the beginning of book 1, was being "steered" by Europa. Cadmus, an effeminate actor, appears as a seductive Siren to catch Typhoeus in the "net of Moira" (15 ἐπὶ δίκτυα Μοίρης); perhaps the allegorical interpretation of Sirens as prostitutes,[51] who figuratively catch clients in their hunting nets,[52] is also at work here. At any rate, the erotic overtones of the last line in this passage are hard to miss: Typhoeus "welcomed the sweet dart of the pipes which was his escort to death" (v. 19 πηκτίδος ἡδὺ βέλεμνον ἐδέξατο πομπὸν ὀλέθρου)—"sweet darts" are, of course, more fittingly dispatched by Eros, rather than by pipes.[53]

Now if we turn back to the scene where Typhoeus' seduction by song actually takes place, at the end of book 1, we find there another simile (1.525–534):

καὶ πλέον οἶστρον ἔγειρε· καὶ ὡς νέος ἡδέι κέντρῳ
ἁβρὸς ἐρωμανέων ἐπιθέλγεται ἥλικι κούρῃ,
καί ποτε μὲν χαρίεντος ἐς ἄργυφα κύκλα προσώπου,
πῇ δὲ βαθυσμήριγγος ἀλήμονα βότρυν ἐθείρης
δέρκεται, ἄλλοτε χεῖρα ῥοδόχροον, ἄλλοτε μίτρῃ
σφιγγομένην ῥοδόεντος ἴτυν μαζοῖο δοκεύει
αὐχένα παπταίνων γυμνούμενον, ἀμφὶ δὲ μορφῇ

50 Luc. *Salt.* 3 σὺ δὲ καὶ δι' ὀφθαλμῶν ἔοικας ὅλος δεδουλῶσθαι ("but you seem to have been entirely enslaved, even through your eyes").

51 See Wedner 1994, 58–61, with Hawes' 2014, 107–108 reservations about attaching the "Euhemerism" label to such allegoresis.

52 In Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (3.11.6–10) Socrates famously advises Theodote on how to lead men into her hunting nets (3.11.10 εἰς τὰ σὰ δίκτυα). The prostitute's net is a recurrent motif in the *corpus* of John Chrysostom (see, e.g., *PG* 61.319 and 709). The imagery of the hunting net is used to describe Cadmus' ruse also at 1.424 ἄρκυν ὀλέθρου, and 482 ἐς λίνον ἄγρης.

53 Βέλεμνον will later appear in erotic contexts at 9.73, 15.235 and 321, 16.13, and 31.172. The word πομπός, which appears here in the phrase πομπὸν ὀλέθρου, is elsewhere used almost exclusively in the conjunction πομπός/πομπόν ἐρώτων, always in the same *sedes* as here (see 5.588, 6.48, 7.297, 8.287, 12.384, 16.283, 42.529, etc).

> θέλγεται ἀλλοπρόσαλλον ἄγων ἀκόρητον ὀπωπὴν
> οὐδὲ λιπεῖν ἐθέλει ποτὲ παρθένον· ὣς ὅ γε Κάδμῳ
> θελγομένην μελέεσσιν ὅλην φρένα δῶκε Τυφωεύς.

> So he excited him to frenzy even more; and as a lusty youth enamored is bewitched by delicious thrills by the side of a maiden his agemate, and gazes now at the silvery round of her charming face, now at a straying curl of her thick hair, now again at a rosy hand, or notes the circle of her blushing breast pressed by the bodice, and watches the bare neck, as he delights to let his eye run over and over her body never satisfied, and never will leave his girl—so Typhoeus yielded his whole soul to Cadmos for the melody to charm.

Similes are extremely rare in the first books of the epic, so the placement of two in such proximity, and in such narratively privileged positions, closing one book and opening the next, must be significant. It is definitely striking how close to gender reversal they both bring Cadmus.[54] Typhoeus here is as excited by Cadmus (or Cadmus' song) as a young man when he gazes at the girl he loves—an extraordinarily *visual* simile to describe seduction by sound. Although, strictly speaking, Cadmus should not himself be part of the *comparanda*—it is actually the effect of *the music* that is being compared to the effect of looking at a beautiful girl—both the syntax and the phrasing of the simile point toward an (at least partial) (re)definition of the hero as a desire-inducing female. The scene in fact prefigures the highly erotic description of Cadmus by Aphrodite–Peisinoe in book 4, with which it shares some similar phrasing.[55]

In the first part of the simile (the vehicle) the narrative focuses on the voyeuristic description of an objectified girl, zooming in on her face, hair, hand, breasts, and neck, culminating in line 532, where Typhoeus-as-young-man-in-love allows his eye to run over the girl's body, never satisfied. The unsatisfied eye (ἀκόρητον ὀπωπήν) will be a characteristic of almost all male lovers in the *Dionysiaca*, from Zeus himself (5.588–589), to Hymnus (15.227), to Dionysus (42.60). For many of them, as here for Typhoeus, it will have disastrous consequences. In the last lines (v. 533–534), the tenor of the simile, Typhoeus submits

54 Vian 1976, 42–43 considers this simile, as well as other elements in the episode, "comical." Hardie 2005, 127 sees it as marking a contrast between Zeus' satisfied, physical lust over Europa and Typhoeus' insatiable (v. 532 ἀκόρητον ὀπωπήν) desire for a text.

55 Compare 1.529 χεῖρα ῥοδόχροον with 4.128 παλάμην ῥοδοδάκτυλον, and 1.531 αὐχένα παπταίνων γυμνούμενον with 4.138 αὐχένα γυμνόν. For the feminization of Cadmus in the speech of Aphrodite-Peisinoe, see Frangoulis 2006, 45–50; 2014, 33–38 and 73.

his whole φρένα, enchanted by the song, to Cadmus himself, like the lover would have submitted his φρένα to his girl, enchanted by her beauty. Now, as Typhoeus yields his soul to Cadmus, not to the song, and the enchantment has been described in such voyeuristic terms, there is a possibility that in the phrase θελγομένην μελέεσσιν of the last verse we are meant to see a pun between μέλος as "melody" and as "limb" or "body part." All translators (correctly, I think) opt for the "melodies" meaning,[56] but the dative plural μελέεσσιν refers to limbs just as often as it does to melodies in the *Dionysiaca*, and given the anatomical description of Cadmus-as-girl that precedes this line, the reader would be excused for thinking more of limbs rather than melodies here.[57] In any case, we are left with an impression of Cadmus as a dangerously sexualized female, who, strikingly, is not the anti-hero, but the "good guy" in the poem.

To be sure, the realms of verbal and sexual enchantment were already interconnected in Homeric epic, with the verb θέλγειν expressing both types of seduction.[58] Odysseus' recitation inspires in Eumaius a ceaseless desire to listen to him (if not look at him).[59] The efforts of war and song are also intertwined: Odysseus' stringing of his bow is likened to a poet preparing his lyre for song in *Od.* 21.405–409. Throughout ancient literature both *eros* and song are employed as strategies for defeating adversaries, but no epic hero is feminized through their use in the way Cadmus is. In Silius' *Punica*, for example, sexual desire and song are used in conjunction to overcome the Carthaginians (11.385–482).[60] When these are stationed in Capua, Venus launches the Cupids'

56 In the simile of book 2, v. 12, the same phrase refers to the Sirens' song.

57 Longus also puns on the two meanings of the word μέλος in 3.23.3–4, where the singing Echo is dismembered and her μέλη (both "limbs" and "melodies") are scattered throughout the earth, "still singing" (ἔτι ᾄδοντα). For the pun and the connection between Longus' Echo and Orpheus' severed, singing head, see Schlapbach 2015, 86 and for the gender politics of this novel as encoded in its musical "order", see Montiglio 2012. In ancient rhetorical theory, speeches were also imagined as composed of "limbs." Hermogenes' Περὶ ἰδεῶν (1.12.20–28) stipulates that a beautiful speech is one whose μέλη are symmetrical, and on which a "good complexion blossoms" (καί τινα ἐπανθεῖν αὐτῷ οἷον εὔχροιαν); on this passage, see Konstan 2015, 371. Rhetoric's ability to overcome reason is also quasi-erotic.

58 See Goldhill 1991, 60, who comments on Phemius' songs as θελκτήρια in *Od.* 1.337: "The songs of the bard, then, are, in Penelope's eyes, a beguiling enchantment for mortals: a possibly deceitful or dangerous allure, which, for her, wastes her spirit." Cf. Halliwell 2011, 47–49 on ἵμερος-arousing song.

59 See *Od.* 17.518–521, where Eumaius says that Odysseus enchanted him (ἔθελγε), and compares him to a bard, at whom one gazes (ποτιδέρκεται), and whom mortals desire to hear incessantly (τοῦ δ' ἄμοτον μεμάασιν ἀκουέμεν). On these lines, see Finkelberg 1998, 91–92; Halliwell 2011, 50–54.

60 On this episode, see Littlewood 2014, 281–284.

shafts against them, causing a sudden breakout of effeminacy among the hitherto warlike Carthaginians. They start requesting constant baths, sleep, sex, and banquets, in the context of which a bard, Teuthras, entertains them, at Venus' command, singing of the power of the lyre (440–480).[61] Like Typhoeus, the Carthaginians do not perceive the danger the bard's song poses for them. Although in both cases song is unambiguously shown to enfeeble those who enjoy it, Teuthras, unlike Cadmus, is not presented in any terms that would compromise his masculinity; on the contrary, he is depicted somewhat as a warrior.[62] Those feminized through Teuthras' music are Hannibal and his men, and this feminization puts them in the position of the "barbarians ripe for Roman conquest"; they will, indeed, end up losing the war.[63]

The gender politics of the *Dionysiaca* seem impossible to pattern onto that of earlier epic. My final example shows just how alien Cadmus' combination of effeminacy and empowerment is for an epic hero. In *Iliad* 22.111–129 Hector fantasizes about laying down his weapons, meeting with Achilles, and offering him the return of Helen, all the property stolen by Paris, and half the wealth of Troy. He breaks off this daydream, however, saying that Achilles would kill him, because he himself would be all "unarmed" (or "naked"; v. 124 γυμνὸν ἐόντα), as if he were a woman (v. 125 ὥς τε γυναῖκα). He then imagines (while still rejecting) the possibility that he and Achilles would meet and converse "like youth and maiden" (παρθένος ἠΐθεός τε in marked epanalepsis in v. 127–128), in a scene that takes place in the countryside, evoking a proto-bucolic idyll.[64] Hector's position in the daydream is markedly feminized, as he first imagines being killed like a (naked) woman, and then, in the scenario of the two lovers, he would presumably play the παρθένος to Achilles' ἠΐθεος.[65] Cadmus is able to make Hector's fantasy come true: not only is he unarmed and meeting with the enemy in a pastoral setting, but he is also described as a girl with various limbs exposed and naked. Surprisingly (if we take the Iliadic scenario), it is not he who gets killed: Typhoeus, the one who still has the arms of Zeus (and can thus be imagined as the Achilles/ἠΐθεος) is the one who will lose the war, and die.

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61 Cadmus' song is similarly self-referential, as it is said to celebrate Zeus' imminent victory (1.523–524), which will be achieved, at least in part, through the song itself.

62 See Marks 2010, 192.

63 See Keith 2010, 373 on the "battle of the sexes" in the *Punica*, and how the Carthaginians lose it.

64 See Richardson 1993, 119–120 (n. on lines 126–128). Lasek 2016, 406–412 reads the Cadmus and Typhoeus episode as an anti-idyll.

65 Winkler highlights the eroticism and effeminacy in Hector's imaginary position, and argues that for the Iliadic hero "the ever-present temptation (which is also a desire) is to be weak" (1990, 175).

To what does Cadmus owe his extraordinary capacity to "become" female and consort with the enemy, and still come out victorious? Nonnus' tendency to invert traditional gender hierarchies and present the feminine beloved as in control, figuratively active (as in the case of Europa) and potentially destructive (as in the case of Cadmus-as-girl) must be part of the answer, although this certainly does not settle the issue. A more comprehensive answer, for which there is no space here, would have to take into account the new ideal of "subordinated masculinity,"[66] which arguably took hold in Late Antiquity under the influence of Christianity,[67] and which admitted of behaviors that earlier models would reject as too submissive or effeminate. If Zeus and Cadmus can be *both* effeminate *and* powerful, it must be because the parameters of masculine status and power have themselves shifted.[68]

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66 This term is coined by Kuefler 2001, the most illuminating and comprehensive analysis of Late Antique masculinities. For the early Christian redefinition of what it means to be male, and how "real" men could (and should) appear unmanly, see Wilson 2015.

67 Early Christian legends occasionally portray inversions of gender attributes and hierarchies comparable to those we find in Nonnus. See Lefteratou 2017 for the legend of the Christian virgin consigned to a brothel who then exchanges clothes with a soldier in order to escape, prompting the man who discovers a soldier instead of a woman in the brothel to exclaim, "I had heard and did not believe that Christ changed water into wine (cf. John 2:1–10), but now he has begun to change sexes as well." (Ambrose, *De virginibus* 4.31). For other Christian legends of cross-dressing and their likely impact on a secular genre, Choricius of Gaza's declamations, see Hadjittofi 2016b.

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PART 3

Exegesis through Paraphrase

CHAPTER 14

Ἀληθείῃ καὶ πνεύματι (*Par.* 4.114): Some Doctrinal Issues in Nonnus' *Paraphrase* and Their Theological Implications

Roberta Franchi

In the theological debate that marks Christian theology, the names "Father" and "Son" are used to denote the first and second persons of the Trinity.* Moreover, each of these two persons can be named as "Spirit," the third person of the Trinity, because, in Christian doctrine, we have three coexistent and co-eternal persons who make up God. God himself is named "Spirit," as John 4:24 clearly points out. Being spirit and being holy are the essential aspects of God that identify him as God. The name "the Holy Spirit" does not support any concrete representation of the third person of the Trinity, although it plays a fundamental role in God's manifestation and activity. In Scripture, it is said that one who knows what "the Holy Spirit" is can know what "Spirit" means, and only one who begins to know what God is can know what "the Holy Spirit" is. Furthermore, only one who begins to have an idea of what the Holy Spirit is can come to know who God is.[1] Thus, some questions cannot fail to resonate. First, what is the Holy Spirit? Next, what are his theological implications? Third, what metaphorical language can give us a proper picture of the Spirit? With regard to the last question, it is understood that the picture will not be accurate and precise, because an infinite God cannot be entirely portrayed by a finite description.

The opportunity to investigate Nonnus' understanding of the place of the Holy Spirit in the *Paraphrase* within the divine triad allows us to look afresh at this complex subject. However, to do so, we must consider Nonnus in context and examine the distinguishing features of his philosophical and doctrinal principles in comparison with other Christian interpretations that formed part of the wider intellectual environment in which he lived and thought. In this

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1 Matt. 11:27; 1 Cor. 2:10–11; Eph. 4:4.

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chapter, I will offer a selection of the most relevant passages referring to the Holy Spirit in the fourth Gospel and in Nonnus' *Paraphrase*. In particular, I will examine those related to water and spirit and those implying a metaphorical approach.

1 Christ's Baptism and the Descent of the Holy Spirit

Called the "spiritual Gospel" since the third century AD, because it tells the story of Jesus in a symbolic way that differs from the Synoptics,[2] the fourth Gospel is obviously rich in references to the Holy Spirit.[3] John gives his readers the first encounter with the Holy Spirit in a passage during John the Baptist's testimony in John 1:29–34, where he is described being questioned by the Pharisees the day after he is baptizing across the Jordan. Jesus' baptism in this passage is not explicitly presented, but it is clearly implied from the context and it suggests foreknowledge of its occurrence in keeping with the Synoptic Gospels (John 1:32): καὶ ἐμαρτύρησεν Ἰωάννης λέγων ὅτι τεθέαμαι τὸ πνεῦμα καταβαῖνον ὡς περιστερὰν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ ἔμεινεν ἐπ' αὐτόν ("Then John gave this testimony: 'I saw the Spirit come down as a dove from heaven and remain on him' ").[4] In this first appearance of the Holy Spirit, he comes to be associated with two distinguishing factors strictly intertwined with his function. The first one is that of identifying Christ as the Messiah, because the permanence of the Spirit's descent on Jesus becomes the typical sign that characterizes his identity and distinguishes him from other prophets.[5] The second aspect aims to show that the Holy Spirit is connected to baptism. John's water baptism, which involves the confession of sin, can be performed by men, and the purpose of the prophet's immersion rite has to be interpreted as a symbolic rite to wash away men's sins. In contrast, only Christ offers the baptism of the Spirit, and it cooperates to introduce the divine plan of salvation to the believer. To express both of these concepts and in keeping with his metaphorical and symbolic language, the fourth Gospel adopts the image of a dove descending from the sky in John 1:32. Biblical scholars have discussed the interpretation of this image extensively. According to

2 Clem. Al. in Eus. *H.E.* 6.14.7; Or. *Jo*. 1.4.6.23. See also Smith 1980.

3 For a detailed overview, see Pastorelli 2006. In spite of the predominant Christological focus, in the Johannine writings the Holy Spirit also has a central role, and it is worth noticing that the theological reflection about the work of the Spirit is entirely focused on its verbal effects, the "logos function."

4 For the Greek text I follow the edition of Merk 1992, 308. The English translation is mine.

5 Cf. Dunn 1975, 41–92; Hahn 2002, 265–266.

some, we have the physical presence of a dove to reveal the incarnation of Jesus by means of the Holy Spirit descended from Heaven. According to others, it seems more appropriate to read this reference in a metaphorical manner.[6]

Let us first focus on how Nonnus has paraphrased this Johannine passage in *Par.* 1.113–118:[7]

καὶ πετάσας στόμα θεῖον ὅλῳ φιλοπευθέι λαῷ
μαρτυρίην ἀγόρευεν ἑῇ πανθελγέι φωνῇ
ὅττι περ αἰθερίων κατανεύμενον ἔδρακε κόλπων
πνεῦμα θεοῦ πτερύγων πεφορημένον ἔμφρονι παλμῷ
ἀντίτυπον μίμημα πελειάδος, ἄχρις ἐπ᾽ αὐτὸν
ἦλθε καὶ αὐτόθι μίμνεν

> And he (*scil.* John the Baptist) unfolded his mouth to all the inquisitive people and harangued the testimony with his all-beguiling voice that: I have seen the spirit of God giving assent from the aetherial hollows, carried along by the prudent vibration of wings, an imitation copy of a dove, until it came upon him and remained there.

In a broader versification than his *Vorlage*, Nonnus introduces significant additions and terms, since he aims to convey something about the primary subject that he wants his audience to grasp. In *Par.* 16.53–54, Jesus' ascent is described by Nonnus in the same way in which he describes the descent of the Spirit from the sky (αἰθερίων ἐπὶ κόλπων / ἵξομαι εἰς γενετῆρα). In similar terms, in *Dion.* 8.368–369 Zeus reveals his divine nature to Semele (δι᾽ αἰθερίοιο δὲ κόλπου / ἀστράπτων πεφόρητο).[8] The parallelism with Jesus' ascent seems to suggest that, like Jesus, the Spirit is from above. We could affirm that Nonnus' emphasis on the descent of the Spirit underlines that the Paraclete-Spirit has come

6 See, for instance, Johnston 1970, 20–21; Keener 2003, 460 (who mentions a possible connection with Noah's dove in Gen. 8:8–12); Burge 1987, 56–59; Keck 1970, 41–67. Although the historical reconstruction is always debated and the narratives about the descent of Spirit "like a dove" during Jesus' baptism are related from a later perspective, the canonical Gospels confirm that during Jesus' earthly ministry he is the only one who has the Spirit.

7 For references to Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*, I rely on the Budé edition. For the *Paraphrase*, I rely on recent critical editions where available. In particular, in this article, see *Par.* 1: De Stefani 2002; *Par.* 4: Caprara 2005; *Par.* 5: Agosti 2003; *Par.* 6: Franchi 2013; and *Par.* 20: Accorinti 1996. Otherwise, I rely on Scheindler's edition (1881). The English translations of the *Paraphrase* are taken from Sherry 1991 and the English translations of the *Dionysiaca* from Rouse 1940.

8 See also De Stefani 2002, 182.

FIGURE 14.1 The baptism of Christ. Arian Baptistry, Ravenna, Italy

from the presence of God in heaven.[9] But there is something more. The expression at verse 116 (ἔμφρονι παλμῷ) is worth noticing, and its striking similarity with other passages in the *Paraphrase* is not only verbal, but also thematic. Introduced in hexameter poetry by Nicander (*Ther*. 744), παλμός in *Par*. 4.66 is termed ἔμφρων, which begins to suggest something to our understanding of the role of the Spirit. It offers a description of the Holy Spirit (Πνεῦμα) in close connection with the symbol of the welling water. The same clause appears in *Par*. 13.95 (πνεύματος οὐρανίου δεδονημένος ἔμφρονι παλμῷ) when Jesus prophesies the looming treason moved by the Spirit. The meaning of ἔμφρων in these cases expresses the intrinsic dynamics of the divine power.[10] Choosing to adopt a Platonic term, such as ἔμφρων (which occurs in the *Paraphrase* to qualify intellectual beings), the poet of Panopolis wants to convey the idea that this Spirit must be interpreted in a metaphorical sense as a *noetic substance* and as a *spiritus doctrinae* or *scientiae*: wisdom is a *proficiens* gnosis of secret mysteries offered by Christ and vivified by the Spirit (Fig. 14.1).

Such an interpretation is confirmed in verse 123 where the Spirit is defined as πνεῦμα θεοῦ νοεροῖο. Adopting another similar Neoplatonic adjective, νοερός (applied in classical as well as in Christian traditions to the intelligible sphere,

9 See Johnston 1970, 3–60.
10 See Caprara 2005, 11–12.

dwelling of the gods, or to a being that possesses a human intelligence illuminated by divine inspiration), the *Paraphrase* introduces an intellectual dimension to the reader that is not always recreated to such a spiritual degree in the *Dionysiaca*.[11] Through ἔμφρων and νοερός, which are both Neoplatonic terms, Nonnus expresses a central topic in Christian theology:[12] the Spirit is wisdom, able to convey throughout God an "intellectual," "spiritual," and "divine" power to create ψυχὰς φωταγωγοῦντες. The Spirit gives wisdom, but that wisdom is both the Spirit's own substance and the wisdom of Father. Thus, the spirit has a unity of substance not merely because he demonstrates identical activities, but because the unity of essence that the Spirit has with the Father seems to result from his being part of the Father.

This relation about the Spirit and the Father must be discussed in the light of John 15:26–27 where Jesus says: "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me." Rich with theological depth, this verse has been at the heart of the burning controversy between the Eastern and Western churches about the Nicene Creed, which was one of the first creeds to mention the eternal procession of the Spirit from the Father. The edition of the creed, which was promulgated at the Council of Nicaea (325) and adopted at the first ecumenical council, maintains that the Spirit proceeds from the Father, but the revised version of Constantinople (381) adds the Latin *filioque* ("and the Son") to demonstrate that the Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. If we pay attention to Nonnus' *Paraphrase*, it seems that the Spirit is only related to the Father, as we do not find any specific reference to the Son.[13] In Nonnus, who seems to adhere to the doctrinal interpretation of the Eastern Church that has consistently argued that the *filioque* clause is totally unnecessary, the Spirit appears as a helper who is presented in the role of co-mediator between God and men (*Par.* 15.105–108):

ἐπὴν δ' ἐπιδήμιον ἔλθῃ
πνεῦμα θεοῦ νοεροῖο διορνύμενον γενετῆρος,
πνεῦμα τόπερ παρὰ πατρὸς ἐς ὑμέας αὐτὸς ἰάλλω,
πολλά με κηρύξειε παρ' ἀνδράσι·

11 Cf. Plot. 3.4.2.15 H.R. Schwyzer; Procl. *H.* 2.4; Synesius *H.* 1.177; 185; 232. See also Caprara 2005, 198; Vian 1990, 254.

12 See Caprara 2005, 63.

13 The same dependence of the Spirit on the Father is in *Par.* 16.43–49. For more details, see Sieber 2016, 322–324.

> Whenever the local spirit of the intellectual god the begetter comes rushing through, which spirit I hurled to you, many things he should herald about me among men.

We cannot exclude that the utilization of Neoplatonic expressions (for instance, πνεῦμα θεοῦ νοεροῖο) to denote the Spirit in the *Paraphrase* could evoke a philosophical background in the mind of a pagan reader. In such a background, triadic speculations are nothing new. Particularly striking is the agreement of Numenius' doctrine with the doctrine presented in the *Chaldean Oracles*. According to Numenius, the Supreme God is not so transcendent as to be altogether passive. Although he is "at rest," good, alone, and one, Numenius sees him as utilizing the joint Second/Third God, which is Nous, the intellect. While the Supreme God relates only to the intelligible realm, the Second and Third relate to both the intelligible and the sensible. The stability (στάσις) of the Third God is an innate motion that is realized in the Second and Third. This "motionless motion" is the energy that produces the stability and order of everything else. Thus, the First God is the source of the order and permanence within the cosmos that is conveyed to the cosmos by the Second God. The Third God (that is the lower half of the Nous) is ὁ διανοούμενος, who is responsible for the determining of creation and who presides immediately over the material cosmos. The Numenian Third God, actively overseeing the life of the cosmos, is attractive as providing a hypostatic model for the Holy Spirit.[14] But, of course, there is the first enormous problem of reconciling all the various references to the Spirit in Scripture to be achieved before forming a philosophical definition of its place within the Trinity.[15]

2 Baptism by Fire and Spirit

Reading Nonnus' description carefully, it seems that the anointing Spirit is perceived as the power or dynamic quality of the Spirit of God that descends upon Christ's humanity and gives it the physical principle of divine life. This anointing represents a sort of *communicatio idiomatum*. In contrast to John the Baptist, Jesus will baptize with fire and spirit (John 1:33): κἀγὼ οὐκ ᾔδειν αὐτόν,

14 Numenius illustrates the participatory relation between the First God and the Second God by using several analogies: that of a farmer and planter, that of a donor and receiver, that of a fire kindled from another fire, and that of knowledge partaken by the receiver from the donor. About Numenius' philosophy, see Dillon 1996, 361–378.

15 See also Rutherford 2010.

ἀλλ᾽ ὁ πέμψας με βαπτίζειν ἐν ὕδατι ἐκεῖνός μοι εἶπεν· ἐφ᾽ ὃν ἂν ἴδῃς τὸ πνεῦμα καταβαῖνον καὶ μένον ἐπ᾽ αὐτόν, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ βαπτίζων ἐν πνεύματι καὶ πυρί ("And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit'"). It is not insignificant that, in contrast to John, Nonnus stresses this opposition between John the Baptist's baptism and Jesus' baptism in *Par.* 1.118–125:

ἐγὼ δέ μιν οὐ πάρος ἔγνων,
ἀλλά μοι αὐτὸς ἔειπεν ἑῇ σημάντορι φωνῇ
ὅστις ἐμὲ προέηκε παλιγγενέων δέμας ἀνδρῶν
βαπτίζειν ἀπύροισι καὶ ἀπνεύστοισι λοετροῖς·
εἰς ὃν ἐσαθρήσειας ὑπηνέμιον καταβαῖνον
πνεῦμα θεοῦ νοεροῖο καὶ ἔμπεδον αὐτόθι μίμνει,
οὗτος ἀφωτίστοισι φάος μερόπεσσιν ὀπάσσει
ἐν πυρὶ βαπτίζων καὶ πνεύματι·

And before I did not recognize him, but he spoke to me himself with his signaling voice, he who impelled me to baptize the body of reborn men with unfired and uninspired lustrations, "He upon whom you could watch the windy spirit of the intellectual god descending and remaining there steadfastly grants light to unlit mortals by baptizing them in fire and spirit."

This contrast of baptism in fire and spirit is recreated by Nonnus in *Par.* 3.114–117. It is difficult to determine if, in the *logion* of John 1:23, the biblical manuscript of Nonnus had the addition καὶ πυρί, as it seems to be attested in the Coptic tradition, or if we are dealing with a direct influence from the Synoptic Gospels. In Matthew and Luke, we read that the coming one will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.[16] However, we must note that in *Par.* 17.60–62 Nonnus amplifies the Johannine pericope again with the mention, absent in John, of a spiritual fire: ὄφρα κε φαιδρύνοιντο τεῷ ζωαρκέι μύθῳ / καὶ καθαροὶ τελέθοιεν ἀληθείης ἁγιασμῷ / πνευματικῷ πυρὶ γυῖα λελουμένοι.[17] Why is Nonnus interested in such imagery?

16 Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16. See also De Stefani 2002, 184–185.

17 The translation reads: "That they be cleansed by your life-supporting expression and become pure by the spiritual sanctification of truth by having washed their limbs with fire."

The inspiration for such additions may derive from the influence exercised by the symbolism of baptism by fire. The familiar symbol of the Spirit as fire occurs in abundance in Eastern Christian literature. According to the Armenians, it is the purifier or sanctifier of the soul and a living flame in the believer providing spiritual power.[18] Baptism by fire is probably related to the judgment, as the Holy Scriptures point out.[19] We can assume that the spirit is not the Holy Spirit at this early Christian source, but either a spirit-wind that accompanies the final judgment or a spirit related to judgment, as in Isa. 4:4 ("a spirit of judgment and a spirit of burning"). Thus, the redefinition of Jesus' role is dealt with explicitly, while implicitly it is a reinterpretation of the fire image.

This symbolism of fire is not superficial in Nonnus' view, as demonstrated by the great depiction of Dionysus' birth and Semele's ascent to the sky in *Dion.* 8.397–414:

κόλπου δ' αἰθομένοιο διαθρῴσκοντα τεκούσης
Βάκχον ἐπουρανίη μαιώσατο φειδομένη φλόξ,
μητροφόνῳ σπινθῆρι μαραινομένων ὑμεναίων·
καὶ βρέφος ἠλιτόμηνον ἀδηλήτου τοκετοῖο
ἄσθμασι φειδομένοισιν ἐχυτλώσαντο κεραυνοί·
καὶ Σεμέλη πυρόεσσαν ἐσαθρήσασα τελευτὴν
ὤλετο τερπομένη λόχιον μόρον· ἦν δὲ νοῆσαι
Ἵμερον, Εἰλείθυιαν, Ἐρινύας εἰν ἑνὶ παστῷ.
καὶ βρέφος ἡμιτέλεστον ἑῷ γενετῆρι λοχεῦσαι
οὐρανίῳ πυρὶ γυῖα λελουμένον ἤγαγεν Ἑρμῆς.
Ζεὺς δὲ βαρυζήλοιο μετατρέψας νόον Ἥρης
ἄγριον ἐπρήυνε παλίλλυτον ὄγχον ἀπειλῆς,
καὶ φλογερὴν Σεμέλην μετανάστιον εἰς πόλον ἄστρων
οὐρανὸν οἶκον ἔχουσαν ἀνήγαγε μητέρα Βάκχου
αἰθερίοις ναέτῃσιν ὁμέστιον, ὡς γένος Ἥρης,
ὡς τόκον Ἁρμονίης ἐξ Ἄρεος, ἐξ Ἀφροδίτης·
καὶ καθαρῷ λούσασα νέον δέμας αἴθοπι πυρσῷ …
καὶ βίον ἄφθιτον ἔσχεν Ὀλύμπιον·

The heavenly flames had mercy, and delivered Bacchos struggling from the mother's burning lap when the married life was withered by the mothermurdering flash; the thunders tempered their breath to bathe the babe,

18 See Burgess 1989, 5–9; McDonnell and Montague 1994, 3–9.
19 Cf. Dan. 7:10; Rev. 20:10.

> untimely born but unhurt. Semele saw her fiery end, and perished rejoicing in a childbearing death. In one bridal chamber could be seen Love, Eileithyia, and the Avengers together. So the babe half-grown, and his limbs washed with heavenly fire, was carried by Hermes to his father to the lying-in. Zeus was able to change the mind of jealous Hera, to calm and undo the savage threatening resentment which burdened her. Semele consumed by the fire he translated into the starry vault; he gave the mother of Bacchos a home in the sky among the heavenly inhabitants, as one of Hera's family, as daughter of Harmonia sprung from both Ares and Aphrodite. So her new body bathed in the purifying fire … she received the immortal life of the Olympians.

Keeping this context in mind, a passage from Euripides' *Bacchae* can also be worth noting. After Pentheus' soldiers have led off the disguised Dionysus to prison, all seems lost. The chorus appeals to Thebes to allow Dionysus to be worshiped. In their appeal, they start chanting the story of his double birth, in which Zeus has given him the new name of Dithyrambus or "He of the Twofold Door." This name refers to Dionysus' dual passage from two wombs into life.[20] In the chant, Zeus pulls the child from the immortal fire. In the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, the goddess tries to perform a similar rite on the child Demophoon in order to make him ageless and immortal. The mention of fire indicates the purpose of the rite to put the child in contact with his strength so that he can grow strong by catching its contagion. The baptism by fire is a rite in which the child acquires strength and immortality.[21]

In book 8, Nonnus pays remarkable attention to the visual aspect of Semele's incineration. Following her prayer to see Zeus in his full power and majesty, the thunderbolt of Zeus, by which Semele is destroyed, is first described in the proem as a bolt producing sparks and lightning. Then, in *Dion.* 8.368–374 the thunderbolt is introduced into a long section rich with fiery symbolism:

> δι᾽ αἰθερίοιο δὲ κόλπου
> ἀστράπτων πεφόρητο καὶ ἱκεσίην ἕο νύμφης
> οὐκ ἐθέλων ἐτέλεσσε πόσις στεροπηγερέτα Ζεύς,
> εἰς Σεμέλην δ᾽ ἐχόρευε κατηφέι χειρὶ τιταίνων
> νυμφιδίους σπινθῆρας ἀμερσιγάμοιο κεραυνοῦ·

20 Cf. Eur. *Bacc.* 519–536.
21 Cf. *Hom. Hymn. Dem.* 239–241.

καὶ θάλαμος στεροπῇσιν ἐλάμπετο, καὶ πυρὸς ἀτμῷ
Ἰσμηνὸς σελάγιζεν, ὅλη δ᾽ ἀμαρύσσετο Θήβη.

He passed from the bosom of the sky shooting fire, and Flashlightning Zeus the husband unwillingly fulfilled the prayer of his young wife. He danced into Semele's chamber, shaking in a reluctant hand the bridegift, those fires of thunder which were to destroy his bride. The chamber was lit up with the lightning, the fiery breath made Ismenos to glitter and all Thebes to twinkle.

We cannot forget that, since the beginning of the *Dionysiaca* (1.1–5), Dionysus, born of lightning and light, is contrasted to that which is born of earth and darkness:

Εἰπέ, θεά, Κρονίδαο διάκτορον αἴθοπος αὐγῆς,
νυμφιδίῳ σπινθῆρι μογοστόκον ἄσθμα κεραυνοῦ,
καὶ στεροπὴν Σεμέλης θαλαμηπόλον· εἰπὲ δὲ φύτλην
Βάκχου δισσοτόκοιο, τὸν ἐκ πυρὸς ὑγρὸν ἀείρας
Ζεὺς βρέφος ἡμιτέλεστον ἀμαιεύτοιο τεκούσης

Tell the tale, Goddess, of Cronides' courier with fiery flame, the gasping travail which the thunderbolt brought with sparks for wedding-torches, the lightning in waiting upon Semele's nuptials; tell the naissance of Bacchos twice-born, whom Zeus lifted still moist from the fire, a baby half-complete born without midwife.

In these verses, much attention has been paid to fire and light so that the symbolism of illumination appears very well connected to Dionysus. At the same time, in Christian doctrine, the association between Christ and light is also well attested,[22] not to mention that Christ is himself explicitly defined as "the light of men" (John 1:4) in the fourth Gospel. This Johannine expression is rich in doctrinal implications. On special occasions, God has opened heaven and sent light from heaven to earth. The proposal of an opening of heaven is consistent with other biblical accounts. When Jesus was baptized, heaven was opened,[23] and when Saul met the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus, "suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him."[24] During Christ's birth, a star guided the wise

22 Ypsilanti 2014; Doroszewski 2014b, 133–134.
23 Cf. Matt. 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:21.
24 Cf. Acts 9:3.

men to him and hovered in the sky above the stable in Bethlehem where Christ is born.[25] It is of great interest that the function of the sparks, upon which Dionysus' birth is developed, is evoked in an epigram "On the Birth of Christ" by Agathias (*AP.* 1.37.1): Σάλπιγγες, στεροπαί, γαῖα τρέμει ("Trumpets, lightning, the earth trembles"). Taking into account that Agathias echoes or imitates Nonnus in his epigrams, we cannot exclude that he is creating a possible intertextuality between the birth of Dionysus and that of Christ.[26] However, the sparks (σπινθῆραι) that accompany the union of Semele and Zeus leading to Dionysus' birth, show up with some regularity in the treatises of the church fathers. Irenaeus speaks about how Christ has sent the spark of life (σπινθῆρα ζωῆς), which has stirred mankind and made them live.[27] In *Par.* 5.135–136 John the Baptist is compared to a true lamp sending out sparks of piety (σπινθῆρας ... εὐσεβίης). Within this literary context, we cannot forget the Greek verb ἀστράπτω, used in the Gospel of Luke to portray Christ's appearance "just like lightning which flashes."[28] Nonnus employs this verb in the proem of the *Dionysiaca* and for Dionysus in *Dion.* 7.98–99: Γηγενέων μετὰ δῆριν, ὁμοῦ μετὰ φύλοπιν Ἰνδῶν / Ζηνὶ συναστράπτοντα δεδέξεται αἰόλος αἰθήρ.[29] No doubt, the image of Dionysus shining besides his father (Ζηνὶ συναστράπτοντα) evokes the text in *Par.* 6.190–192 where the relationship between Christ and his Father appears expressed in the same terms:

εἰ δέ κεν ἀθρήσητε συναστράπτοντα τοκῆι,
αἰθερίων, ὅθεν ἦλθεν, ἑῶν ἐπιβήτορα θώκων
ἀνθρώπου πάλιν υἷα, τί ῥέξετε τοῦτο μαθόντες;

> If you will see the son of man again flashing alongside the parent mounting his own aetherial seats whence he came, what will you do upon learning this?

In Christian poetry, Romanus Melodus writes: "To those who were in darkness a bright light was seen flashing out (ἀστράπτουσα) from Bethlehem."[30] For Christians, Christ is the light par excellence.

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25 Cf. Matt. 2:9.
26 See Shorrock 2011, 91.
27 Cf. Ir. *Haer.* 1.18.1.
28 Luke 17:24.
29 The translation reads: "After the battle with the giants, after the Indian War, [my son] will be received by the bright upper air to shine beside Zeus." See also Shorrock 2011, 92.
30 Cf. Rom. Mel. *Cant.* 16.1.3–4.

3 The Metaphorical Language: The Wind, the Dove, and the Breeze

Apart from the symbolism of light and fire, Nonnus cannot fail to approach the Holy Spirit by means of a metaphorical language. The first image he uses is that of the wind, frequently adopted to depict the action of the Spirit. From Plato onwards, the spirit is defined as ἀήρ to express the impression of movement and force as effects of his presence. In the Septuagint, πνεῦμα, which translates the Hebrew word *ruaḥ*, assumes the same meanings of "wind" and "breath," also suggesting the central idea of active power or energy.[31] The second image is that of the dove, an infallible sign of the presence of the Spirit and called the Spirit by metonymy; not that it is really the Spirit, but it shows in which way man can grasp the Spirit. In John, the dove portrays the Paraclete-Spirit coming upon Christ at the beginning of his public ministry and emphasizes the power of the Holy Spirit on Christ for his work, becoming one of the main references to explain Johannine pneumatology. These symbols in the *Paraphrase* come to represent those divine energies: the main qualities of the immanent God that have been made known to human beings.[32] Also in the *Paraphrase*, symbolic language attempts to express the inexpressible since the poet of Panopolis seeks to know the unknowable.

Classical and Late Antique cultures invested considerable philosophical and theological efforts in the intellectual ability to "see" invisible things in a manner analogous to bodily sight.[33] With what eyes can a reader see the Spirit? Nonnus shows his poetic ability by describing invisible things, namely the Holy Spirit, and significantly, by allowing others to visualize these things through the medium of poetry. At the same time, he reveals his philosophical position as someone writing on the brink of a period of transition, in which the intellectual tradition is to be associated with philosophical, mystical, and/or literary means of accessing higher truths or Christian doctrines.

In keeping with his *Vorlage* and by means of symbolic implications, the Nonnian narrative emphasizes that Jesus' divine anointing is not only a subjective experience of Jesus himself, but also a demonstrable and real confirmation in time and space that he is truly the incarnate Son of God.[34] In *Par.* 1.122 Nonnus

31 See Dodd 1970, 214–227.

32 *Par.* 1.122–123 εἰς ὃν ἐσαθρήσειας ὑπηνέμιον καταβαῖνον / πνεῦμα θεοῦ νοεροῖο καὶ ἔμπεδον αὐτόθι μίμνει.

33 See Maguire 1981; Cavallo 1994, 31–62; Nelson 2000, 143–168; Agosti 2006, 2008.

34 Quite significant in the fourth Gospel is also the way John the Baptist is depicted. If the Gospel of Mark incorporated him in the *kerygma*, depriving him of any significance of his own and identified him with the suffering Elijah, the author of the fourth Gospel fully Christianizes him, making him the solemn witness of Jesus' messiahship (cf. John 1:7).

stresses the testimony of John the Baptist by means of terms related to "see" (εἰς ὃν ἐσαθρήσειας ὑπηνέμιον καταβαῖνον). Thus, the *Paraphrase* makes the baptism in the Jordan a key moment in the life of Jesus, especially in connection with the progressive deification of his human nature. This reading seems to find fertile ground when we look a little more closely at another meaningful adjective, πτερόεις, which is adopted by Nonnus in two theological contexts. In *Par.* 6.82 this adjective denotes the powerful action of the Spirit, which quickly conducts the boat of the disciples toward Capernaum (ἐπεὶ θεοδινέι παλμῷ / *οἷα νόος πτερόεις* ἀνέμων δίχα, νόσφιν ἐρετμῶν, / τηλεπόροις λιμένεσσιν ὁμίλεεν αὐτομάτη νηῦς). The Homeric simile of winged thought,[35] used to emphasize the swift approach of the boat, goes beyond the mere utilization of the Homeric model, because it is used again in the first appearance of Jesus to his disciples after his death. In this appearance, he is πτερόεις, in keeping with the Christian exegesis of these two Johannine episodes as explained by John Chrysostom and Cyril of Alexandria.[36] If the concreteness of the simile makes it a natural vehicle of the expression for the literary artist, this specific Homeric simile in Nonnus is *sui generis*. In fact, considering that, from Homer onwards, wings are a metaphor to denote oars, and that Christ is portrayed while ascending in the sky in *Par.* 20.87, it is possible to obtain an equivalence by combining the representation of the sea storm in *Par.* 6 with the appearance of the risen Jesus in *Par.* 20: Christ:boat = oars:wings. In such a way, we can add to the Homeric *imitatio* the representation of Christ appearing among the disciples as πνεῦμα, devoid of his human nature.[37]

In the sixth canto, Nonnus portrays Jesus crossing the sea with the purpose of revealing his dominion over the waters in the storm. Using the sea as a path to get to the disciples, he shows how his omnipotence can be applied to his holy body, which is later revealed openly through his resurrection.[38] In the Nonnian interpretation, the Christ, who is transfigured in the flesh, stripped of his human condition, and spiritualized, encompasses the essence of his divine nature and anticipates the mystery of his future resurrection.[39] In light of such considerations, the Spirit and Christ have been somehow connected by Nonnus. In fact, the two indwellings cannot be distinguished since to consciousness

35 Cf. Hom. *Od.* 11.125; 23.272 οὐδ' εὐῆρε' ἐρετμά, τά τε πτερὰ νηυσὶ πέλονται.

36 Cf. *Par.* 20.87 (*scil.* Christ) ὡς πτερὸν ἠὲ νόημα μετάρσιος εἰς μέσον ἔστη. See also Cyr. Al. *In Jo.* 20.19–20 (*PG* 74.704B); Jo. Chrys. *Hom.* 87.1, *in Jo.* 20.24–25 (*PG* 59.474).

37 See Accorinti 1996, 196–198; Franchi 2013, 107–109.

38 Cf. *Par.* 6.75–76 Χριστὸν ἐθηήσαντο διαστείχοντα θαλάσσης, / ἄβροχον ἴχνος ἔχοντα, βατῆς ἁλὸς ὀξὺν ὁδίτην. Cf. De Ausejo 1959, II, 219–234.

39 See Franchi 2013, 107.

they are one. The Spirit seems to be a sort of alter ego of Christ's nature, and a detailed description of the Spirit, provided by Nonnus in *Par*. 14.61–64, seems to support this conception:

> καὶ θεὸν αἰτίζω γενέτην ἐμόν, ὄφρα κεν ὑμῖν
> οὐρανόθεν πέμψειε παράκλητον μετανάστην,
> Χριστῷ σύγγονον ἄλλον, ὁμοίιον, ἔμπεδον αἰεὶ
> ἀτρεκίης ὀχετηγόν·

> And I will ask god my begetter, that he should send to you from heaven a migrant Paraclete, another cognate, similar to Christ, continuous steadfast conductor of certitude.

> John 14:16–17 κἀγὼ ἐρωτήσω τὸν πατέρα καὶ ἄλλον παράκλητον δώσει ὑμῖν, ἵνα μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ᾖ, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας.

> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth.

As the Son, sent by the Father, belongs to the divine and transcendent realm of the Father, so the Paraclete, who is sent by the Father as well, possesses the same divine dignity of the Father. From the Father, he receives everything that constitutes his identity and activities in order to communicate the salvific gift of God to men. Fully conscious of this doctrinal implication, Nonnus equates οὐρανόθεν πέμψειε at verse 62 (related to the Spirit) in a perfect symmetrical way to οὐρανόθεν πέμψαντος ἐμέ at verse 98 (for Jesus). With respect to their hypostatic being, if Christ and the Holy Spirit are both sent by God and represent the two persons of the Trinity who are indispensable so that man can gain union with God, they remain two distinct persons in this activity in the world.[40]

The Holy Spirit is independent of the Son. Precisely because of this freedom, divinity can manifest itself entirely to those who have faith.[41] For that reason, Nonnus defines the Spirit as μετανάστην (v. 62). With its meaning of "tramp" or "migrant," this term may appear strange as an epithet of the Holy Spirit. Yet it

40 The idea that the Spirit did play a significant role in Jesus' ministry is supported by the fact that some of his most authentic sayings are strongly influenced by the tradition from Isa. 61:1–3, such as the three authentic Beatitudes (Luke 6:20–21; Matt. 5:3–5), or Jesus' answer to the Baptist (Luke 7:18–23; Matt. 11:2–6). See also Sieber 2016, 321–324.

41 See Dodd 1970, 179–186; Frey 2014.

is in keeping with the Alexandrian tradition, where Philo of Alexandria, referring to the prodigious experience and presence of a supernatural force in the mind of the prophet, speaks of the ἄφιξις μετανάστασις concerning the divine spirit.[42] Indeed, Origen distinguishes the permanent presence of the Spirit over Jesus, which characterizes only Christ, from the presence of the Spirit in all other men, in whom the Spirit passes only briefly. While passing, he does not stop.[43] In the church fathers, the Spirit is often connoted as ἄτρεπτον or ἀναλλοίωτον, and in Christ, he is persistent,[44] not *fugit*, as Nonnus clarifies in *Par.* 1.123: πνεῦμα θεοῦ νοεροῖο καὶ ἔμπεδον αὐτόθι *μίμνει*. The reference to the same origin and nature, as well as the hypostatic distinction characterizing Christ and the Spirit, appears again at verse 63 where the Greek term Χριστῷ at the beginning of the verse is followed by the words σύγγονον and ἄλλον. Such additions allow Nonnus to resolve the difficult interpretation of the Johannine expression ἄλλον παράκλητον by understanding it as a clear statement about the consubstantiality of the Spirit in close connection with Christ despite the diversity of the persons.[45]

Another term worth noticing is the adjective ὁμοίιον at verse 63. First, by defining the Spirit as ὁμοίιον, Nonnus eliminates the ambiguity created by the well-known belief that the Spirit is ἴδιον of the Father and the Son, as though he would be a mere divine energy without possessing any hypostatic essence. In contrast, the Spirit is a person with the same divine prerogatives of the Son, who is joined in the salvific work. Second, by adopting this adjective in keeping with Gregory of Nazianzus, whose usage expresses a divine quality that never changes but remains persistently the same,[46] Nonnus not only confirms the

42 Cf. Phil. *Div. her.* 265.

43 Cf. Or. *Hom. in Num.* 6.3.3 (*SC* 415.150) *Si dixisset: "Spiritum descendentem" et non addidisset: "et manentem in eo," nihil praecipuum a ceteris habere videretur. Nunc autem addidit: "et manentem in eo," ut esset hoc signi in Salvatore, quod in nullo alio posset ostendi*; 6.3.4 (*SC* 415.152) *quia enim solus est "qui peccatum non fecit," idcirco in ipso solo "mansit" et permansit Spiritus Sanctus.* See also Nenci 2013–2014, 36–41.

44 Cf. Or. *Hom. in Sam.* 5.9 (*SC* 328.202) μόνος γὰρ ἀπόλλυσι χάριν προφητικήν, ὃς μετὰ τὸ προφητεῦσαι πεποίηκεν ἀνάξια τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου ὥστ᾽ ἐγκαταλιπεῖν αὐτὸν καὶ φυγεῖν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἡγεμονικοῦ αὐτοῦ, ὅπερ ἐφοβεῖτο τότε μετὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν καὶ ὁ Δαβὶδ καὶ ἔλεγεν· "Καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιόν σου μὴ ἀντανέλῃς ἀπ᾽ ἐμοῦ" (Ps. 50:13).

45 The term "the Paraclete" was probably first coined for the heavenly Christ who helps the believers as a heavenly intercessor in the realm of the Father (1John 2:1). The fact that the Spirit-Paraclete is introduced in the Gospel as the "other Paraclete" (John 14:16) probably points to an original concept of Jesus as the first Paraclete/advocate.

46 Cf. Greg. Naz. *Carm.* 1.2.2.160–162 (*PG* 37.591) Μή ποτ᾽ ἐφ᾽ ὑμετέρῳ λαιμῷ, μή, τέκνα, χέοιτε, / ἀλλὰ Θεῷ ζώοιτε, Θεὸν δέ τε πλοῦτον ἔχοιτε / μοῦνον ἀεὶ ζώοντα, ὁμοίϊον, ἀστυφέλικτον.

whole divinity of Spirit but also evokes the theological unity of divinity at the basis of the Trinity. We must keep in mind that heretics consider the Holy Spirit as ἀνόμοιον, ἀλλότριον, ξένον: a different person with regard to the Father and the Son.

Nonnus tries to express the activity of the Holy Spirit as the third divine person who completes the work of the Trinity in his unity. In fact, the term ὀχετηγός, used at verse 64, goes back to a philosophical background where the Greek term ὀχετός is frequently attested, especially in the *Chaldean Oracles*, to indicate the channels through which the fire, containing everything, is transmitted from God to the world.[47] This Greek word is appropriate to represent the role of the Spirit as a conductor who directs the disciples toward Jesus, the truth. The Spirit guides in the same way of God, who guides his people from Egypt to the Promised Land in the Exodus,[48] or of Jesus, who proclaims himself to be the way and the truth.[49] In the *Paraphrase*, the Spirit is a spiritual vehicle and a heavenly help who permits humanity access to the truth of Christ and to divine life.

4 Doctrinal Implications: The Dialogue between Christ and Nicodemus

In the fourth Gospel, the effect of baptism is described as regeneration.[50] The renewal is effected by the Holy Spirit, the gift of which is connected with baptism, and it gives the Christian the hope of inheriting eternal life.[51] This basic Johannine theological teaching is a reinterpretation of the gospel of the Kingdom of Jesus of Nazareth proclaimed in the Synoptic Gospels, and it is developed in the dialogue between Christ and Nicodemus in John 3:1–21. The entire dialogue is constructed in three successive stages, each leading to a statement of Jesus introduced by a repeated "amen" formula (ἀμὴν ἀμήν). The first two read: ἐὰν μή τις γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν (John 3:3) and ἐὰν μή τις γεννηθῇ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ Πνεύματος (John 3:5).[52] Thus, taking into account such development, we can wonder: what is the relationship between "water" (ὕδωρ) and "spirit" (πνεῦμα)?

47 Cf. *Orac. Chald.* 2.4; 65.2; 66.1; 110.1. See also Gigli Piccardi 1985, 73; Zambon 2005, 307–335.
48 Cf. Ex. 13:17–18.
49 Cf. John 14:6.
50 Cf. John 3:3 ἐὰν μή τις γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν … and John 3:5 ἐὰν μή τις γεννηθῇ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ Πνεύματος, οὐ δύναται εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ. See also Ferraro 1995, 36–48.
51 Cf. John 3:5–7.
52 John 3:5 has often been associated with Christian baptism; see Brown 1966/7.

Is water set in contrast to the spirit, or do water and spirit reflect a conceptual unity? How did Nonnus read this Johannine section?

The starting problem is Nicodemus' difficulty of understanding how a man can be born of ἄνωθεν, as he has understood ἄνωθεν in a temporal sense instead of a spiritual one.[53] His confusion is evident by the use of δεύτερον or "a second time" for "again" although the word is unambiguously temporal (John 3:4). This clear misunderstanding prompts Nicodemus' question: how can one reenter his mother's κοιλία? He is thinking of a physical birth, as revealed by the obvious sense of κοιλία or "womb." The only other use of this word in John is in 7:38 where the Greek term is applied within a context in which the Evangelist focuses on the fact that believers will receive the life-giving Spirit (John 7:39). Being born again could mean receiving the living water of the Spirit which flows from Jesus' womb, perhaps with the result that these living waters, or even the Spirit, then flow from the believers' womb. In John 3:5, the preposition ἐξ governs two nouns, ὕδατος and Πνεύματος, coordinated by καί, which indicates that Jesus regards ὕδατος καὶ Πνεύματος as a conceptual unity. This concept has been emphasized by Nonnus, who in *Par.* 3.27, at the end of the verse, has added πνεύματος ἐξ ἁγίοιο καὶ ὕδατος εἰν ἑνὶ θεσμῷ. Water and spirit are strictly intertwined, so this phrase may be taken either as a "water-spirit" source or as a "water-and-Spirit" source of birth. According to Nonnus' view, on the one hand there is a birth that is characterized either as "water-spirit" or as "water-and-Spirit." On the other hand, there is no contrast between an external element of "water" and an inward renewal achieved by the Spirit. As Christ explains to Nicodemus, rebirth is not through re-entering the mother, but through being born of the Spirit (John 3:6–7). This Johannine section has been amplified by Nonnus in *Par.* 3.32–37:

καὶ γὰρ ὅπερ μερόπων χθονίη διεώσατο γαστήρ,
σαρκὸς ἀπὸ βροτέης μορφούμενον, ἀνδρομέη σάρξ
τοῦτο πέλει· τὸ δὲ θεῖον, ὅπερ καθαροῖο λοετροῦ
πνεύματος αὐτογόνοιο πέλει τετελεσμένον ἄτμῳ[54]
πνεῦμα πέλει ζωαρκές, ἀμαιεύτῳ τινὶ θεσμῷ
αὐτόματον βλάστημα παλιγγενέος τοκετοῖο.

For in fact, whatever the earthly womb of mortals lets pop out formed from mortal flesh, this is human flesh. But the divine part, which arises

53 A brief discussion is also offered by Doroszewski 2014b, 128–132.

54 At the end of the verse 35, Livrea correctly defends the *lectio* in the manuscripts of the *Paraphrase*: καθαροῖο λοετροῦ. See Livrea 2008, 287–288.

> from the pure lustration of the self-born spirit, is the self-sustaining spirit, a spontaneous scion of a reborn birth by an amaieutic manner.
>
> John 3:6 τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς σάρξ ἐστιν, καὶ τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος πνεῦμά ἐστιν.
>
> That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

In the first part of his paraphrase, Nonnus has included many terms related to the Earth or a material sphere, whose remarkable function, far from being a baroque versification based on the addition of unuseful terms, is enhanced by the utilization of the *Rahmende Stellung* at verse 33 between σαρκός and σάρξ. Indeed, the second part has been marked by the importance of being born of the spirit: the pure lavacri are the baptism's lavacri, because water prepares an individual for regeneration provided by the Spirit. Nonnus is now focusing on the distinction between the higher and spiritual reality against the material one. This dominant dualism clearly goes back to Neoplatonic philosophy where the world of space, matter, and time is radically inferior to the noumenal world. This vision includes dualism of form and matter, essence and appearance, spiritual and material, and heavenly and earthly. It is also associated with the idea of the duality of human essence consisting of two natures: spiritual (soul) and corporeal (body). Water purifies the body and the Spirit cleanses the soul, thus accomplishing rebirth from above and illumination of the whole human being. In *Par.* 6.193–196, following his *Vorlage* and in explanation for the rejection of Christ's message by many, Nonnus records that it is the Spirit who gives life while the flesh profits nothing. Again, the term σάρξ in this content possesses a negative allusion, whereas the accumulation of terminology related to the terrestrial sphere (v. 194 σαρκὸς ἐπιχθονίης βροτέη φύσις) aims to devalue the human dimension in order to highlight its transience and mutability.[55]

To return to Nicodemus' dialogue, it is worth noting that Nonnus, in keeping with the Jewish-Christian tradition,[56] portrays the Spirit as ζωαρκές (v. 36), an epithet used by Proclus in the hymn addressed to Helios: κλῦθι, φάους ταμία, ζωαρκέος, ὦ ἄνα, πηγῆς (*Hymn* 1.2). The reference to the Holy Spirit as life-giver (v. 37) occurs again in John 3:8 when the Evangelist tries to describe the mysterious and divine action of the Spirit. An individual who is born of the Spirit

55 See Franchi 2013, 143, 480–482.

56 Cf. 2 Macc. 14:46; 2 Cor. 3:6 τὸ πνεῦμα ζῳοποιεῖ; and Phil. *Op. mund.* 30 ζωτικώτατον τὸ πνεῦμα.

will not comprehend but only experience this mysterious working of the Spirit. How can this work in progress be explained? The comparison between the working of the Spirit and the breeze of the wind aims to clarify that, as the wind blows mysteriously, so the Spirit works. The wind blows wherever it wants, and in a similar way, the Spirit does whatever pleases the Godhead in keeping with its own will (John 3:8). The Spirit, however, does not blow in the same way as the wind nor does the power of the Spirit work in the same way as that of the wind (*Par*. 3.42–47):

ἀγχιφανῆ δὲ
φωνῆς ἠερίης θεοδινέα βόμβον ἀκούεις,
οὔασιν ὑμετέροις πεφορημένον· ἀλλὰ δαῆναι
οὐ δύνασαι βλεφάροις, πόθεν ἔρχεται ἢ πόθι βαίνει·
οὕτω παντὸς ἔφυ τύπος ἀνέρος ἐκ πυρὸς ὑγροῦ
πνεύματι τικτομένοιο καὶ οὐ στροφάλιγγι κονίης.

> You hear with your ears the god-driven buzzing of the airy sound carried along nearby. But with your eyes you cannot know whence it comes or whither it goes. In this way the mold of every man has come into being from the liquid fire born by water, not from the whirl of dust.

By means of some Greek terms, the metaphorical interaction takes place in the *Paraphrase*. The wind and the Spirit have a power that transcends human knowledge, but the essence of these two powers, as well as the way in which they function, differs sharply. The Spirit possesses evident animate qualities, while the wind is inanimate.[57]

The Stoic notion of συμπάθεια reminds us of the existence of the cosmic "inter-connection" of all material things that is able to evoke specific sensory experiences. Therefore, we easily comprehend that there is more to visual perception than just seeing things. When we approach the visual culture of Late Antiquity, where the visual is "talked about" and not "looked at" because there is a correspondence between word and image (γραφή), perceptions are the first step in order to achieve knowledge of what we are surrounded by: (a) the cosmos and all its components, and (b) God. From the senses, the concept of truth or God begins to be envisioned. Nonnus addresses his reader mainly with terms and verbs implying movement or auditory perception (v. 43 ἀκούεις; v. 44 οὔασιν; v. 45 βλεφάροις, πόθεν ἔρχεται ἢ πόθι βαίνει), in order to identify the main steps

57 See Simelidis 2016, 292–293.

toward the proper knowledge of the highest dimensions. In ancient literature, eyes are considered better witnesses than ears;[58] *videre* is the channel through which the images, coming from the outside world, can be acknowledged, sifted, and accepted or not. The sensory field allows us an exploration of the spatio-temporal relationship between god and man and raises the question how this can be aptly represented and communicated.

As in the *Paraphrase*, the onomatopoeic word βόμβον (v. 43) tries to express soundly that man can know that the Spirit is present, since he can hear his activity although he cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. In this background, it is worth noting that the adjective θεοδινής (v. 43), created *ex officina nonniana*, is attested only in the *Paraphrase*.[59] Among the variety of its references, it can be worthwhile to examine two expressions. In *Par.* 4.67 the pouring out of the intellectual fountains of the living water is a reference to the Holy Spirit, who dwells within all believers. In *Par.* 6.81 ἐπεὶ θεοδινέι παλμῷ is a first *iunctura*, which remarks the miraculous atmosphere of the approach of the boat at Capernaum.[60] Simultaneously, it reveals its dependence on Christian exegesis.[61] Origen also mentions the arrival of the boat to the place where it is directed thanks to a divine power.[62] Thus, although the activities of God in the plan of salvation are mysterious, we have subjective and objective evidence of God's presence.

In the *Paraphrase*, Jesus' explanation of the work of the Holy Spirit with the mention of a spiritual birth may also evoke Dionysus in the mind of a pagan reader, pointing to a parallel between the birth of Jesus and Dionysus. As we have seen, in Greek mythology Dionysus becomes also known as "the Twice-Born god" from his mother and the male womb of Zeus. From the beginning of the *Dionysiaca*, Nonnus evokes this myth and presents the premature fetus of Dionysus "whom Zeus plucked wet from the fire" (*Dion.* 1.4 τὸν ἐκ πυρὸς ὑγρὸν ἀείρας). In an effort to find a correspondence of this image in Greek literature, we might recall Quintus of Smyrna and the scene at the beginning of *Posthome-*

58 For instance, in Heracl. *fr.* 22B, 101a [15] D-K (1, p. 173) ὀφθαλμοὶ γὰρ τῶν ὤτων ἀκριβέστεροι μάρτυρες; Plat. *Phdr.* 250D; and Hdt. 1.8 ὦτα γὰρ τυγχάνει ἀνθρώποισιν ἐόντα ἀπιστότερα ὀφθαλμῶν.

59 Cf. *Par.* 1.93 θεοδινέος ἔγκυος ὀμφῆς; 3.43 φωνῆς ἠερίης θεοδινέα βόμβον; and 4.67 ἁλλόμενον νοεροῖο βυθοῦ θεοδινέι ῥιπῇ.

60 See Franchi 2013, 379.

61 Cf. Cyr. Al. *In Jo.* 6.19–20 (*PG* 73.469B) οὐ κινδύνων μόνον ἀπαλλάττει τοὺς πλωτῆρας ὁ κύριος, παραδόξως αὐτοῖς ἐπιλάμψας, ἀλλ' ἤδη …, δυνάμει τῇ θεοπρεπεῖ τῇ κατ' ἀντίπεραν γῇ προσερείσας τὸ σκάφος.

62 Cf. Or. *fr. in Pr.* 30 (*PG* 33.10 ff.) εὐθέως γὰρ ἐγένετο τὸ πλοῖον ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν, εἰς ἣν ὑπῆγον, θείᾳ δυνάμει.

rica 4 in which Apollo lifts the body of Glaucus from the funeral pyre at Troy for burial in Lycia (4.4–6):

τὸν δ᾽ αὐτὸς Ἀπόλλων
ἐκ πυρὸς αἰθομένοιο μάλ᾽ ἐσσυμένως ἀναείρας
δῶκε θοοῖς Ἀνέμοισι φέρειν Λυκίης σχέδον αἴης.

> Apollo himself swiftly lifted him up out of the blazing fire and gave him to the swift winds to take to the land of Lycia.

While Quintus of Smyrna is mentioning the taking away of a dead body from a burning pyre by the god Apollo, Nonnus is depicting the plucking of a living fetus from a burning womb by Zeus. However, from a Christian perspective, the verses of the *Dionysiaca* where we have the double birth of Dionysus, once from a mortal mother and then from an immortal father, evoke the double birth of the Christian from flesh and spirit, whose sacramental and spiritual function is mentioned in the dialogue between Christ and Nicodemus. The key to this syncretistic purpose is the expression ἐκ πυρὸς ὑγροῦ, which is used by Nonnus both for Dionysus' birth and for the man born of spirit and fire in Nicodemus' speech (v. 46).[63] While the Christianization of Dionysus is the main purpose of Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*, the attribution of Dionysiac imagery to Christ demonstrates that, when the poet decided to write the *Paraphrase*, the composition of the *Dionysiaca* was already in progress. At that time, having at his disposal the main conceptual and literary background, Nonnus could transfer language from one sphere to the other.[64] That this was one of the main purposes of Nonnus is revealed, for instance, by the Greek expression ἄσθμα κεραυνοῦ in *Dion.* 1.2 that shows how this breeze of the lightning is similar to that of the Spirit[65] and to the Spirit of fire mentioned in John. We might also conclude that, in Nonnus, fire and πνεῦμα make up a conceptual unity, so that we can think of them either as a "fire-spirit" source or as a "fire-and-Spirit" source of generation.

The new direction of the eschatological dimension of the Christian baptism is the *pneumatological* outlook, which from the beginning of the Christian literary production is developed consistently mainly in Paul, but also in the Synoptic Gospels. In the fifth century AD, this outlook is developed most elegantly in Nonnus' *Paraphrase*, where it is substantiated with doctrinal and metaphorical implications.

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63 See Shorrock 2011, 85.
64 See Accorinti 2016, 30–47; Shorrock 2016, 577–600; Spanoudakis 2016, 601–624.
65 Cf. *Par.* 5.101 βιοσσόον ἆσθμα.

5 In Truth and Spirit: Christ and the Samaritan Woman

The dialogue between Christ and the Samaritan woman offers remarkable room to investigate the function of worship in close connection with the Spirit. Christ points out that only those who are initiated by the Holy Spirit (*Par.* 4.111 ἀληθέες … μύσται) are able to venerate God by means of a true adoration (v. 114 ἀληθείῃ καὶ πνεύματι).[66] Unfortunately, Vian has misunderstood the real meaning of this Nonnian section, defining it as a sort of "*enjolivément litteraire*."[67] Vian seems not to have grasped the close intertextuality of Nonnus' text with the reinterpretation, well underway in the Christian literature at that time, of terms and concepts related to the mystery religions. The Greek term μύστης is a religious *terminus technicus* used by Nonnus for those who are initiated to the Christian mysteries: namely Christian sacraments or liturgy. From the fourth century AD onwards, the term "mystery" and its derivatives are connected with that which later came to be called sacraments.[68] By connoting Jewish celebrations as orgiastic rites involving animal sacrifices, frenzy, and sacrifices on altars (*Par.* 4.85–109), in Nonnus' view, the arid Jewish rites will be replaced with those practiced in Jerusalem μυστιπόλος.[69] Nonnus maintains that all true worshippers (v. 111 ἀληθέες) will worship in spirit and truth (v. 114 ἀληθείῃ καὶ πνεύματι).[70] The omission of the Johannine ἐν with the dative case does not imply a substantial alteration or modification of the meaning of the Gospel; the dative case expresses the subsisting and genuine relationship with the action of worship. This relationship consists in the reception by man of the Holy Spirit, and in a better understanding of what is truth: the divine reality proclaimed by Christ. The Spirit is active in both the proclamation and the reception of truth. God must be worshiped according to truth (John 4:24). What is the significance of "truth" in this claim?[71] The Greek term ἀλήθεια in the Nonnian context has to

66 See Caprara 2005, 22–23.
67 See Vian 1988, 408.
68 In antiquity, it is recorded in rituals with secret teachings, both religious and political, and accompanied by a host of exotic activities and customs. These mysteries may have originated in the ritualistic activities of primitive peoples, but they took much of their shape from the Greek world (Dionysiac, Eleusinian, Orphic, etc.) and then combined creatively with various Eastern cults before assuming their final form during the Roman (or Greco-Roman) period. Because Christianity developed during the height of the mystery cults, and because of the notable resemblances between them, the history of religions formulated the theory of reciprocal dependence, and in particular the dependence of Christianity on the mystery cults.
69 See Caprara 2005, 17–28; Doroszewski 2014a, 301; Spanoudakis 2014, 31.
70 See also Ferraro 1995, 54–67.
71 See Dodd 1970, 170–178.

do with the content of Christianity as the essential realm, so that true worship means something that man can grasp based on revelation. Πνεῦμα comes to be in close connection with the invisible and eternal reality, becoming simultaneously the medium and the tool for communicating the knowledge of this spiritual reality.[72] As Spanoudakis rightly points out, spiritualization, granted by the infusion of philosophical truth, is an essential element of most texts composed in the fifth century AD and of the *Paraphrase*, which comes to spiritualize the "spiritual Gospel."[73]

In the following verses, Nonnus clarifies the distinctive characteristics of the true worshippers: they worship πνεύματι θεσπεσίῳ, "fulfilled by the spirit," and ἀληθέι μάρτυρι φωνῇ, "with a voice that gives testimony to truth" (v. 117). The Spirit is the root, the origin, of this truth, whereas the testimony is the result of this new dimension in spirit and truth. The question to John's readers is whether Christ continues, reveals, and carries out a work that brings healing and liberation: namely, whether he brings life and truth. In recounting the signs as the life-giving work of God in Jesus, the Gospel reminds its readers that there is no other bread of life, no other shepherd, and no other way or truth. This is said in the simple words in John 14:6: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Instead, in the *Paraphrase*, truth seems not to be mediated through the person of Jesus. In the versification of this Johannine pericope in *Par*. 14.20, Nonnus omits the reference to Christ as the truth and he focuses on the concept of true and eternal life given by Christ: ζωὴ ἀληθείη τε καὶ ὄρθιός εἰμι πορείη (I am the life and the truth and the upright journey).

Interestingly, in *Par*. 15.1, Nonnus again avoids any mention of the authenticity of the vine: παλιναυξέι κόσμῳ / ζωῆς ἄμπελός εἰμι (I am the vine of life for the regrowing world). An implicit allusion to Dionysus is obvious for any reader of that time. Nonnus prefers to focus on the concept of regeneration in connection with the symbolism of the vine as the tree of life, an exegetical interpretation well attested in the Christian Alexandrian tradition,[74] and able to find correspondence in the Dionysiac imagery of the vine, evoked in the *Dionysiaca*, to express the same concepts of regeneration, rebirth, and resurrection.[75]

We must keep in mind that the essence of the Dionysiac world is constituted by a changeable, inconstant, and vibrant reality. Dionysus is the god who breaks boundaries, because he is like and unlike, comic and tragic, savior and

72 See Caprara 2005, 22–23.

73 See Spanoudakis 2014, 31.

74 See Didym. *Ps*. 1.3 (*PG* 39.1157C); Cyr. Al. *In Jo*. 15.1 (*PG* 74.333B). On this symbolism, see Daniélou 1961, 33–48.

75 See Gigli Piccardi 2003, 81–82; Shorrock 2011, 75.

destroyer: he is the πολύμορφος θεός or the perfect emblem of Late Antiquity. According to this perspective, the prologue of the *Dionysiaca* is relevant, where Nonnus associates the principle of *poikilia* to the object of his poem, Dionysus. In *Dion.* 1.15, Nonnus significantly mentions Proteus (ποικίλον εἶδος ἔχων), because he will sing a "multiform hymn" (ὅτι ποικίλον ὕμνον ἀράσσω). In such a way, the variety of the style, language, and literary genre finds correspondence in a divinity whose main distinctive characteristics are metamorphosis and an illusional realm. Not truth, but metamorphosis, in relation with the principle of *poikilia*, is the main element of the Dionysiac world.[76]

Although Nonnus is immersed in this changeable word, he does not fail to comprehend that the concept of truth is one of the leading concepts in Johannine theology. By using the adjective ἐτήτυμος employed in Homer in contexts of the authenticity of a discourse,[77] the poet of Panopolis has respected the theological idea at the basis of his *Vorlage*, which uses a set of *symbola* to describe, in contrast to the false reality, the true one: Christ. In the *Paraphrase*, truth appears as a sort of path that leads to God: *Par.* 8.79–80 τότε γνώσεσθε καὶ αὐτοὶ / οἶμον ἀληθείης θεοτερπέος (Then you also will recognize the path of god-pleasing truth). The problem that remains unclear is the origin of truth and the identity of the God of truth. Nothing is specified.

In the dialogue of the Samaritan woman, Nonnus concludes that Spirit and truth are transformed into only one impulse of life, because the divine energy is constituted by spirit and truth. Under the pressure of such an impulse, mankind tributes the right worship to God: a worship renovated by the participation to the divine energy (*Par.* 4.114–121):

μυστιπόλους γὰρ
τοίους ὑψιμέδων ἐθέλει θεός, οἵτινες αὐτῷ
ἀκροπαγῆ κάμπτουσι συνήορα γούνατα γαίῃ
πνεύματι θεσπεσίῳ καὶ ἀληθέι μάρτυρι φωνῇ,
ἐν δαπέδῳ πρηνηδὸν ἐρειδομένοιο προσώπου·
πνεῦμα θεὸς νημερτές, ὅθεν χρέος ἀνέρας ἕλκει
ἀτρεκίην καὶ πνεῦμα μιῇ κεράσαντας ἐρωῇ
ἀενάου κόσμοιο θεὸν γενετῆρα γεραίρειν

For God ruling on high wants such mystic solemnizing men who bend their pair of knees fixed to the ground with the divine spirit and with

76 Transformation is an aspect of Nonnian *poikilia*, which appears in close connection with Dionysiac shape-shifting. See the general study by Fauth 1981.

77 Cf. Hom. *Il.* 22.438; *Od.* 23.62.

true witnessing voice with their face also supported prone on the ground. God is the unerring spirit from where a need draws men who have mixed certitude and spirit in one impulse to honor god the begetter of the ever-flowing world.

John 4:23 ἀλλὰ ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν ἐστιν, ὅτε οἱ ἀληθινοὶ προσκυνηταὶ προσκυνήσουσιν τῷ πατρὶ ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ· καὶ γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ τοιούτους ζητεῖ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας αὐτόν.

But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people.

The Nonnian exegesis of this Johannine pericope does not find correspondence in the commentary on the Gospel of John by Cyril of Alexandria, who prefers to point out the spiritual nature of the worship inaugurated by Christ, nor in John Chrysostom, who focuses on the spiritual essence of this new type of worship, which is no longer confined to a physical place. If God is spirit, δεῖ τοίνυν τοῦ ἀσωμάτου καὶ τὴν λατρείαν τοιαύτην εἶναι, καὶ διὰ τοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν ἀσωμάτου προσφέρεσθαι.[78] Nonnus is thinking of the Christological interpretation given by Paul where the genuine Christian προσκύνεσις is a central practice.

As Caprara has clearly demonstrated, the Pauline reference gives the opportunity to encapsulate the Nonnian section into the well-established Jewish-Christian tradition of προσκύνεσις. For instance, Gen. 17:3, where Abraham falls on his face and God talks with him; Deut. 9:18, where Moses performs the penitential acts of prostration and fasting; or Dan. 6:11, where Daniel's practice of getting down on his knees three times a day to pray and praise God is described. The pericope of Phil. 2:10 also becomes an important reference in ancient Christian literature to the thematic of prayer. In this background, a passage taken from Origen's *Treatise on Prayer* 31.1 is worth noting.[79] The allusion to the practice of γονυκλισία places Nonnus' departure from the Christian models, when he mentions worship: a departure that would have been recognized by his educated audience.

The practice of γόνατα κλίνειν along with the mention of χεῖρας ἀνατείνειν portrays an individual who is praying, as several ancient sources point out (Fig. 14.2). In Byzantine liturgy, we find the practice of genuflection at the end of

78 See Cyr. Al. *In Jo.* 4.23–24 (*PG* 73.313C); Jo. Chrys. *Hom. in Jo.* 33.2 (*PG* 59.190).

79 See Caprara 2005, 23–24.

FIGURE 14.2 Christ and Leo VI the Wise (or Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos). Mosaic at imperial gate, tympanum, Hagia Sophia, late ninth or early tenth century. Istanbul, Turkey

the celebration of First Vespers of Pentecost Sunday, whose institution seems to go back to Basil of Caesarea, as attested in a passage of his *On the Holy Spirit*.[80] The antiquity of this rite is demonstrated by a hymn of Severus of Antioch (d. 538), transmitted in a Syriac translation by James of Edessa (d. 708): "When the Holy Spirit has shone and be revealed to us in God-befitting fashion, we bow the knee because we cannot endure the sight of him, and we signify that it is through the Spirit, the Paraclete, that we have learned the perfect worship in the Holy Spirit."[81] The passage of John 4:24 immediately follows in the text.

Analyzed in the light of such a milieu of Christian sources, the Nonnian section acquires a new perspective: the Samaritans are ὁμοφραδέες. As well, the true worshippers must worship πάντες ἀληθείῃ καὶ πνεύματι (*Par*. 4.114) and ἀτρεκίην καὶ πνεῦμα μιῇ κεράσαντας ἐρωῇ (v. 120).

80 Bas. *Spir*. 27.66. See Mercenier 1949, 382–395; Caprara 2005, 25 n. 53.
81 For the translation, see Brooks 1909, 147. See also Caprara 2005, 26–27.

6 The Living Water, the Spirit, and Eternal Life

When we consider the metaphorical usage for the Holy Spirit in Nonnus, we have to mention the Paraclete-Spirit as the primary subject and the life-giving water as the secondary subject. Considering this, several points are noteworthy: life-giving water as a quality of the Holy Spirit signifies that he is the source of eternal life, and he who has the Paraclete-Spirit will have life in abundance.[82] In keeping with John, the metaphorical examples of ὕδωρ are largely employed in Nonnus for spiritual vivification. As a metaphor, the living water represents life that is produced by the Spirit. In John 4:14, the water given by Jesus becomes "a well of water springing up to eternal life," while in 7:38–39, we read, "From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water." As in the case of the Spirit, Nonnus emphasizes the vitality of the divine energy able to revitalize the believer thanks to a living water characterized by its persistent abundance: *Par*. 7.146–148 ἀεί ~ αὐτοχύτῳ ~ παλιμφυές; 4.66–69 μένει ῥόος ~ παλιμφυές ~ ζωῆς ἀενάοιο. Water and Spirit have been brought by Nonnus closely, in keeping with Christian literature.[83]

If we pay attention to *Par*. 4.66–69, where Nonnus is speaking about the believer, we will note that the language and the imagery clearly evoke the text in *Par*. 7.143–147.[84] In both cases, the poet specifies that ἔμφρονες ποταμοί pour a divine water, present in the innermost recesses. Choosing to engage with a Neo-platonic language, the *Paraphrase* clarifies that this "intellectual" water of the Spirit, flowing from the believer, is able to give the true teaching of the divine mysteries, the χωρηγία τῶν θείων μαθημάτων. But there is something more. The affirmation of the Spirit in the image of water, as formulated in John 4 and 7, provides Nonnus with the connection between Christology and pneumatology. Christ is the well of living water, which means that the crucified Lord is the generative source of life for the world.[85] The well of the Spirit is the crucified Christ. From him, each Christian becomes the well of the Spirit. In fact, it is also important to comprehend that all the power of the image is connected to pneumatology. Since the poet introduces the allusion to Christ as πηγή in *Par*.

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82 Cf. John 4:14; 7:37–39.

83 The same connection appears in a passage of John Chrysostom, *Hom. in Jo*. 32.1 (*PG* 59.183) τοῦ Πνεύματος τὴν χάριν ἡ Γραφὴ ποτὲ μὲν πῦρ, ποτὲ δὲ ὕδωρ καλεῖ, δεικνῦσα ὅτι οὐκ οὐσίας ἐστὶ ταῦτα παραστατικὰ τὰ ὀνόματα, ἀλλ' ἐνεργείας … οὕτω … ὕδωρ καλεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα, and in Cyril of Alexandria, *In Jo*. 4.10 (*PG* 73.297B) ἐν ὕδατος προσηγορίᾳ τὸ θεῖον πολλάκις κατωνόμασται πνεῦμα. See also Caprara 2005, 197–198.

84 See Caprara 2005, 12–15; Ferraro 1995, 75–84. See also Franchi 2018, 203–208.

85 See Underwood 1950, 96–99.

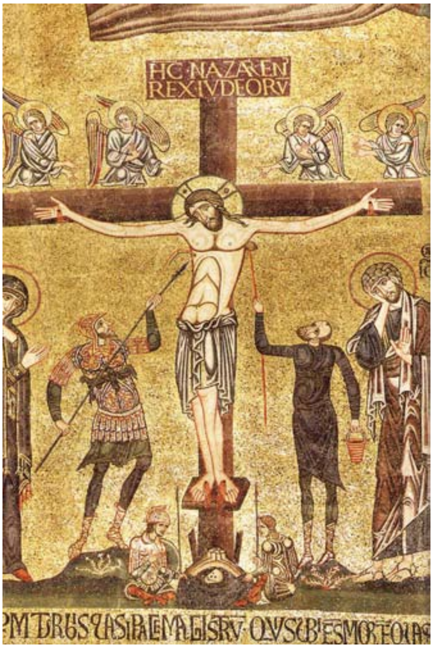

FIGURE 14.3
Crucifixion. Basilica di San Marco, Venice, Italy

7.144, we are also able to evoke line 19.181, where Jesus, pierced in the side by a spear, becomes a fountain of blood and water:

καὶ διδύμαις λιβάδεσσιν ἀπὸ πλευροῖο τυπέντος
πρῶτα μὲν αἷμα χύθη, μετέπειτα δὲ θέσκελον ὕδωρ.

> And from the struck side with twin libations first flowed blood, next divine water.

Like in John, the terms "Spirit" and "water," often used in combination with each other or at least to allude to the connection between the two, are visible all throughout the *Paraphrase*. We find these terms in chapter 1 where water accompanies Jesus' inauguration and anointing in the Spirit to the crucifixion of Jesus (John 1:25–34). In the light of such considerations, we are not surprised that, in the versification of John 19:34, when Jesus is stabbed with a lance, the *Paraphrase* clarifies at verse 181 that a θέσκελον ὕδωρ pours forth (Fig. 14.3). As such, life-giving water and life-giving Spirit go hand-in-hand in the *Paraphrase*.

Nonnus' description of the miraculous flow of blood and water, after Jesus has accomplished his work of redemption upon Golgotha, contains a reflection of this same image of Christ as the source of "living water" or the vivifying Spirit, as the poet does not fail to highlight: 4.68 πηγῆς ἐνδομύχοιο παλιμφυὲς ἔμπεδον

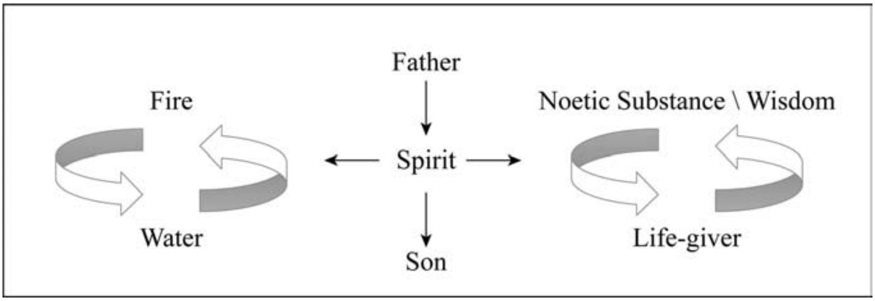

FIGURE 14.4 Diagram of the Holy Spirit as presented in the *Paraphrase*

ὕδωρ; 7.148 ἔνθεον ὕδωρ; and 19.181 θέσκελον ὕδωρ. In this context, Nonnus pursues the connection between a theology of the cross and a theology of history, which is suggested by John 19 and whose wide influence in Christian literature has been largely demonstrated by Hugo Rahner.[86]

7 Concluding Remarks

The *Paraphrase* of Nonnus attempts to grasp the particular physiognomy of the Holy Spirit by describing him using metaphorical and symbolic allusions originating in most cases from a philosophical background. Nonnus' interpretation of the Holy Spirit can be illustrated as shown in Figure 14.4. Looking at the whole of Nonnus' interpretation about the Spirit, we can say that the poet embraces this task completely, trying to explain the basis of the dynamic relation between Father and Son through the Spirit. Choosing to adopt a metaphorical language, consisting mainly in the adoption of fire and water as symbolic elements and rich with deep doctrinal implications, the Holy Spirit has been intended as a source of revelation and wisdom or as an empowerment for more effective activity by God. This aspect is made clear by Nonnus' *Paraphrase* when he depicts him as a medium and a gift given to believers to allow them to come to a better understanding of God, as well as to assure them of the presence of the Father and of the Son. However, in some contexts, the use of πνεῦμα suggests not a reference to the Spirit per se, but a reference to the impartation of God's nature as πνεῦμα. In Nonnus, the concept of πνεῦμα is intertwined strictly with the Father and proceeds from him. The emphasis is on the nature and work of the Spirit and on its characterization as the third Person of the Trinity.

86 See Rahner 1964, 175–235.

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CHAPTER 15

Nonnus and the Book

Jane Lucy Lightfoot

Nonnus' love of sound is well known. Both his poems create worlds of various kinds of sound. The Jesus of the *Paraphrasis* is endowed with powerful and effectual voice, the culmination of a tradition of prophets filled with divine inspiration that speaks through them as ὀμφή (oracular voice), even when they are writing.

In a series of previous papers I have talked about Nonnus' treatment of prophecy, where loud, resonant, and inspired speech is a theme in poems whose broad tendency is to present speech acts, singly and in combination, as special performances worthy of the reader's attention.[1] In this chapter I supply the complement, Nonnus' treatment of books. St John's Gospel is full of references to scripture: scripture in general, citations, and quasi-citations. They provide confirmatory backup for Christ's career, to show that the ancient prophets foresaw it and, conversely, that Jesus' actions are conformable with the inspired utterances of those wise men. My basic question simply concerns how Nonnus presents books. To be sure, he endows them with voice, but do different patterns emerge in each work? And how do they compare with other works where both speech and text come into play (for instance the *Oracula Sibyllina*)?

I begin by looking at the way he renders parts of the root γραφ-, whether noun or verb. Of thirty-one instances, just under half (fourteen) are rendered with another part of the same root.[2] Verbs tend to be rendered with verbs (though the tense might change, or a compound is substituted for a simplex), nouns with nouns or nominal phrases, participles with participles or verbal adjectives. Of the remaining seventeen instances, about half (eight) involve verbs rendered with a synonym in the corresponding inflection (e.g., γεγραμμέν- becomes κεχαραγμέν-, or less often τετυπωμέν-; ἐὰν γράφηται > αἴκε χαράξῃ).[3] Both methods sometimes involve expansions, e.g., nouns into geni-

1 Lightfoot 2014, 2016, 2018.

2 Verb with verb: 1.178 f. ~ 1:46; 5.178 f. ~ 5:46; 19.101 f. ~ 19:19; 19.111 ~ 19:21; 19.115 ~ 19:22. Noun with noun: 5.154 ~ 5:39; 5.180 ~ 5:47; 7.55–57 ~ 7:15; 10.127 ~ 10:35; 17.43 ~ 17:12. Participle with participle or verbal adjective: 6.129 ~ 6:31; 20.138 ~ 20:30. Other: 15.103 f. ~ 15:25; 21.138 ~ 21:24.

3 10.123 ~ 10:34; 19.103 ~ 19:19; 21.141 f. ~ 21:25. Including suppletive references to books: 2.89 ~ 2:17; 2.108 f. ~ 2:22; 8.21 f. ~ 8:17; 12.72 f. ~ 12:16; 20.140 ~ 20:31.

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tival expressions, perfect passive participles embellished with a dative noun, the proliferation of ornamental epithets that reveal the characteristics Nonnus imputes to books. That leaves nine instances. In 'multi-media' expressions such as καθὼς εἶπεν ἡ γραφή (as scripture said), Nonnus prefers to render the modality of the verb rather than that of the noun (that is, he prefers 'speech' words to 'text' words, which he converts to speech accordingly).[4] In a couple of cases, references to scripture are anomalously dropped (19:28, 20:9), and in a further three, writing is turned to music.[5] These are cases where the Gospel refers to 'scripture' but Nonnus has explicitated a reference to the Psalms, which he makes clear by his use of musical vocabulary. In a couple of further passages where the Gospel refers to what is written in the law (νόμος), Nonnus correctly understands that the references are actually to the Psalms. In 10.126 ~ 10:34 (MT Ps. 82:6) he supplements the reference to the law with ἀοιδή (song), and in 15.103 f. ~ 15:25 (MT Ps. 35:19, 69:4), the law becomes the θέσκελος ὀμφή / ἀνέρος εὐφόρμιγγος (the wondrous voice of a man skilled in the lyre).[6]

Nonnus has not explicitated every single reference or allusion to the Psalms. There are numerous passages where he shows no sign of acknowledging the Psalmic background.[7] But where explicitation does occur, it is usually through references to song and stringed instruments (ἀοιδή, μολπή; the kithara, phorminx; the verb ψάλλειν, 'pluck'). Whereas the underlying word in the Gospel is γραφή or νόμος, Nonnus refers to the source of the sound, the song or musical instruments. The effect is perhaps one of disembodied sound or spontaneous music; rather like the voice-words Nonnus uses for prophecy, the premium is on sound itself, rather than on the artist who produces it (though cf. a single reference to an instrumentalist, at 15.104).

If we approach it the other way round, beginning with Nonnus' references to Scripture (concentrating on the word βίβλος) and considering their Gospel foundations, we find approaches which I will distinguish as 'lexical' and 'suppletive'. By the former I mean that Nonnus has rendered a reference to a text with a reference to a text; this happens very obviously with the Gospel's only two uses of the word 'book' (20:30 ~ 20.138 θέσπιδι βίβλῳ; and 21:25 ~ 21.142 βίβλους). By the latter I mean that the reference to Scripture has been inserted into the paraphrase without departing from or doing violence to the syntax of

4 7.145 f. ~ 7:38; 7.162 ~ 7:42; 12.66 ~ 12.14; 19.189 ~ 19:37.

5 13.81 ~ 13:18; 19.127 f. ~ 19:24; 19.185 f. ~ 19:36.

6 The edition of the *Paraphrasis* used here is that of Scheindler 1881. All translations are my own.

7 2.89 ~ 2:17 (MT Ps. 69:9); 6.129 ~ 6:31 (MT Ps. 78:24); 7.162–165 ~ 7: 41 f. (MT Ps. 89:3–4); 12.58 ~ 12:13 (MT Ps. 118:25–26); 12.131 ~ 12:34 (MT Ps. 89:4, 36; 110:4).

the Gospel, with which Nonnus is careful to maintain the parallelism, but without a strict correspondence in the Gospel underlay.

References to books in the *Paraphrasis* tend to have a lexical point of departure. This is so where books figure as synonyms for scripture (1.179 ~ 1:46; 8.22 ~ 8:17) or in genitival expansions of scripture and law (1.53 ~ 1:17; 2.108 ~ 2:22; 5.154 ~ 5:39; 18.151 f. ~ 18:31; cf. 10.127 ~10:35) or as supplements to verbs of writing (2.89 ~ 2:17; 8.22 ~ 8:17; 12.73 ~ 12:16). But Nonnus may also adopt a suppletive approach when references to books complement verbs of speaking (1.82 f. ~ 1:23) or cognition (6.218 ~ 6:69) or witnessing (5.148 ~ 5:37). I include in this category a couple of cases where the paraphrase substitutes a verb of writing for a verb of speaking (1.86 f. ~ 1:23, 12.163 ~ 12:41). Finally, there are also three cases where clauses superadded to the original also contain references to books (7.156 ὃν ἔγραφε βίβλος, 'whom the book mentioned in writing' ~ 7:40; 7.159 f. ~ 7:41; 19.34 f. ὅν ποτε βίβλῳ / θεσμοθέται γράψαντο, 'which lawgivers once inscribed in a book' ~ 19:7).

What observations can be made so far? Nonnus' references to books tend to be in the singular (all but four out of twenty-two instances, of which one [5.154] is a periphrastic rendering of the only plural instance of γραφαί in the Gospel,[8] another [21.117] is textually suspect; a third [21.142] renders plural βιβλία in the original, while the last [6.218] is a vague reference to 'scriptures' with which Simon Peter is familiar). The effect is to present 'the book' as something iconic, and sacred scripture as a single corpus—especially where βίβλος is the single lexical substitute for 'the law' (1.179, 8.22) or, still more, when it stands in for γραφή (2.108) where the latter refers to a specific passage; 'a scripture' thus becomes 'the book'. Where St. John already had a tendency to gesture hazily at 'scripture' to prove that Jesus' earthly career was already forecast,[9] Nonnus reinforces this in his references to a single definitive 'book'. On the other hand, while Nonnus renders the Gospel's two unique uses of 'book' as βίβλος (above), his renderings of γραφή are extremely variable: he may indeed refer to a book (2.108, 10.127), but he may also call it μῦθος (7.146), or ὀμφή (7.162), or explicitate a reference to Psalms (above), or conjure up an individual with a speaking voice (19.189).

Nonnus' representation of 'the book' thus takes its departure from the Gospel, even if his own tendencies are overlaid upon it. But his paraphrastic procedure here forms a strong contrast with the treatment of ὀμφή, all instances of which are Nonnus' imposition on the Gospel original. Twice he interposes a

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8 Even here, Agosti comments that 'il plurale rimanda all'interpretazione delle Scritture come "libro unico" in cui è annunciata la venuta del Cristo' (2003, 521).

9 Beutler 1996.

whole clause (3.164 ~ 3:34, 5.106 f. ~ 5:28); these expansions are longer than two of the three involving βίβλος. Three times a Gospel reference to γραφή or νόμος is either expanded to include the word ὀμφή (10.127 ~ 10:35; 15.103 f. ~ 15:25) or the latter ousts the former altogether (7.162 ~ 7:42). But the commonest pattern is for the original to be expanded so that references to ὀμφή piggy-back, as it were, on the original syntax.[10] In other words, where Nonnus' approach to books might be described as expansive (but building on an existing basis), his approach to prophetic voice (ὀμφή) is interpolative. He goes further out of his way to include it. And, where one medium is substituted for another (text for speech or speech for text), the substitution is more radical in the direction from writing to prophetic speech than in the opposite direction.

Nonetheless, it would be premature to conclude that because Nonnus is more adventurous with ὀμφή than with βίβλος he is more interested in it. Let us turn to the ornamental epithets that Nonnus applies to books in both the *Paraphrasis* and *Dionysiaca* in order to gain some further insight into his presentation of both the written and the spoken word.

Epithets denoting 'marvellousness' or divine quality are in principle equally applicable to text and speech (θεόπνευστος, θεόρρητος, θέσπις, ζάθεος);[11] so too those denoting the qualities of wisdom (σοφός), sentience (ἔμφρων), and truth (ἀληθής, ἐτήτυμος). Many of these associations are found in the *Dionysiaca* as well as the *Paraphrasis*, especially in the passage on Cadmus' introduction of writing from Egypt into Greece (*Dion.* 4.259 ff.).[12] Written text in that passage is endowed with sound (263 γραπτὸν ἀσιγήτοιο τύπον … σιγῆς, 'written impression of speaking silence'[13]), spoken of as a miraculous art (264 θεσπεσίης … τέχνης), derived from sacred writings (267 ζαθέων … βίβλων), associated with wisdom (265 Αἰγυπτίης σοφίης). True, if words are not silent, it is more straightforwardly because Cadmus has devised an art for representing sound in graphic form, in conformity with ancient theory about the alphabet—not because they are endowed with resonant prophetic voice (contrast *Par.* 6.218). But the force of that contrast is blunted by *Dion.* 12.107, 41.399, in both of which written

10 Complementing a verb of speech: 1.194 ~ 1:49; 3.49 ~ 3:10; 8.104 ~ 8:39; 11.83 ~ 11:25; 12.152 ~ 12:38; 12.166 ~ 12:41; 14.116 ~ 14:29 (a very common mannerism with other voice-nouns as well, e.g. αὐδή, ἠχώ, ἰωή, φωνή). Other instances: 1.93 ~ 1:25, 3.53 ~ 3:11; 5.141 ~ 5:36; 6.58 ~ 6:15; 6.196 ~ 6:63; 8.139 ~ 8:47; 13.88 ~ 13:19.

11 Among epithets pertaining to the divine inspiration of books, θεόγλωσσος and θεόπνευστος are unique to *Par.* θεόρρητος (of books in *Par.* 5.154, of speech in 14.25) occurs in *Dion.* 38.53, but of discourses *about* rather than *inspired by* the gods.

12 Gigli Piccardi 1998, 69–71.

13 The edition of the *Dionysiaca* used here is that of Keydell 1959. All translations are my own.

(inscribed) hexameter oracles are quoted and associated with the quality of ὀμφή; the *verbatim* quotation of the resonant prophetic words bears comparison with the paraphrases of Isaiah and the Psalms in *Par.* 12.156–166 and 15.103–105, both of which lay the prophet's oracular ὀμφή directly before us.

An interesting motif that both works share is the metaphor of wisdom as 'milk',[14] a nurturing substance, although in *Dion.* 4.267 the 'milk' comes from texts and in *Par.* 19.195 from Jesus' oral teaching, of which Joseph of Arimathea is the beneficiary. This metaphor, found in texts from the late Hellenistic period, tends to be used in one of two ways. In Philo, Epictetus, and some passages in the NT, it is used to draw a contrast between baby food and the more challenging fare of adults, implying a contrast between intellectual immaturity and maturity.[15] Elsewhere in the NT and in the Odes of Solomon the contrast is missing, and milk on its own is sustaining, nurturing, the gift of a kind God.[16] Nonnus uses the metaphor in this second sense, the *Paraphrasis* even challenging the idea of intellectual pap by calling the milk 'wise'. The *Dionysiaca* uses the metaphor in a particularly sophisticated way, since Cadmus is drawing a double benefit from the 'milk' of his books, by learning both the technology of their writing and their mystic religious doctrines. Paradoxically, however, while the milk metaphor would normally imply beneficence and accessibility, for Cadmus that milk is 'unspeakable' (ἄρρητος), suggesting perhaps exclusivity or abstruseness of content. That is not an implication we find in the *Paraphrasis*, where the wisdom of the Judeo-Christian scriptures is never esoteric or inaccessible. Nonnus uses ἄρρητος only for the mystery of the incarnation (*Par.* 1.1, 1.40), but in neither passage of the *Paraphrasis* where this epithet is used is it a question of wisdom revealed, or concealed, in *books*.

I shall return to that contrast, but for the moment I draw attention to a difference of emphasis within the *Paraphrasis* itself. Although, as noted, ἀληθής and ἐτήτυμος may be qualities of both speech and writing, the applications to speech notably outnumber the applications to text. Ἐτήτυμος is applied to speech nine times (3.53, 3.137, 4.80, 4.174, 4.198, 5.123, 6.196, 11.88, 19.184), and denied to verbal reports twice (4.6, 8.9); but it applies only once to prophetic scripture (5.179), and once more in a self-reference by the present writer (21.140). The pattern is precisely the same with ἀληθής: eight applications

14 Gigli Piccardi 1985, 110–112; Ramsey Michaels 1988, 88 (on 1 Pet. 2:2); Lane 1991, 137 (on Heb. 5:12); for Philo, Williamson 1970, 280–285.

15 Epictet. 2.16.39, 3.24.9; Phil. *De migr. Abr.* 29, *de Agric.* 9; *De Somn.* 2.10, *Quod Omn. Prob.* 160, *De Congr.* 19; 1 Cor. 3:2; Heb. 5:12–13.

16 1 Pet. 2:2; for the Odes of Solomon, see Ramsey Michaels 1988 (n. 14); also Clem. Al. *Paed.* 1.6.34.3–52.1; Hippol. *Ref.* 5.8.30.

to spoken words (1.126, 1.135, 4.117, 5.130, 9.15, 9.90, 9.110, 11.209, cf. 4.106, 7.93) and only once to a definite text, where the present writer calls himself μάρτυς ἀληθείης ('a witness of the truth', 20.138).

Of course, it is not that written scripture is *not* endowed with truth, but that Nonnus has themes which he prefers to associate with each medium. If 'truth' tends to be a 'speech' motif, there may also be a tendency—though less strong—for written language and writing prophets to be 'wise'. Σοφός qualifies scriptures at 7.160 and 12.73, and even the inscription over the cross at 19.103 (wisdom inheres in literacy itself—or is the point that the inscription 'King of the Jews' is wiser than its writer realized?). In connection with their written prophecies it qualifies Moses at 1.178 and πολύϊδρις (much-knowing) Isaiah at 1.87 (as well as an unnamed Phrygian seer who does not write but interprets a portent at *Dion.* 38.46).[17] It might also be worth noting the combination of wisdom and antiquity for both Moses in *Par.* 1.178 f. and Phanes in *Dion.* 12.67 f.

The strong association between voice and truth can perhaps be developed a little further. It is well known that John has what almost amounts to an obsession with 'witness'. In a magisterial article on Nonnus' development of this theme,[18] Francis Vian made a case for the priority of the *Paraphrasis* over the *Dionysiaca*, showing how the 'witness' theme tends to be subject to deformation *vis-à-vis* its rendering of the Gospel. What did not receive quite as much as emphasis as it deserved, however, was Nonnus' habitual connection of the witness theme with live speech.[19] The vocal character of witness is almost always stressed—very often by Nonnus' paraphrastic technique of rendering forms of μαρτυρεῖν with a verb of speech governing μαρτυρίην or μάρτυρα μῦθον—and in the one passage where scripture's capacity as witness comes into question, there, too, it acquires a voice. That passage is John 5:31–39, where Jesus claims that, while his own testimony on himself is valueless, he has witnesses in John, in his own works, in his Father, and in the Scriptures. With every one of these types of witness Nonnus places strong emphasis on its vocal character (123 f.; 140; 142–144), and when he comes to God's witness he explicitates it in terms of the Scriptures conceived as the spoken words of the prophets (144–149 [~ 5:37]; 154–158 [~ 5:39]). There is a crescendo of sound that develops from the silent (eloquent but non-vocal) testimony of his own deeds through the codices that

17 Conversely, ποικιλόμυθος ('versatile of speech') applies to an author of written oracles in *Dion.* 12.68 but to Hermes in *Dion.* 3.423 (where writing is not at issue); in *Par.* 3.9 it is epithet of 'rabbi' and of προφήτης in 7.193.

18 Vian 1997.

19 Rotondo 2008, esp. 305–307, 'La voce del testimone', though in practice the discussion is restricted to John the Baptist.

resonate with the divinely tongued words of the prophets to scriptures that shout aloud their testimony with the clarion quality of trumpets. Witness has nothing like so close an association with speech in the *Dionysiaca*, and where the association does occur, it has generally been degraded from testimony to teaching and faith to banality and paradox.[20]

Nonnus' renderings of John's fulfilment citations also repay closer scrutiny. In the Gospel, passages where scripture is cited in order to demonstrate the accord between it and Jesus' actions very often involve part of the verb γράφειν, especially the perfect passive participle, or a verb of fulfilment with a nominal subject (ἵνα ἡ γραφή/ὁ λόγος πληρωθῇ/τελειωθῇ). Unsurprisingly, parts of the verb γράφειν tend to be rendered as writing (2.89 ~ 2:17; 6.129 ~ 6:31; 10.123 ~ 10:34; 12.73 ~ 12:16; cf. also 1.178–179 ἐπέγραφε ~ 1:46 ἔγραψεν), whereas 7:42, which uses a verb of speech (οὐχ ἡ γραφὴ εἶπεν, 'did not scripture say?'[21]), is rendered vocally (7.162 οὐ τοῦτο θεηγόρος ἔννεπεν ὀμφή, 'did not the divinely tongued prophetic voice say this?'). Exceptionally, at 1.86 f. (~ 1:23) the Gospel's εἶπεν is converted into a textual citation; the words are in John's mouth, and the point may be that when he cites Isaiah as a proof text he does so as a learned, *textual*, complement to himself, a speaker whose words are resonant with divine power. But phrases using verbs of fulfilment are perhaps more interesting, because here the verb does not itself mandate the choice of text or speech. So it may be significant that Nonnus chooses to render all of them vocally.[22] I suggest that where Scripture is quoted in fulfilment, and where the Gospel wording does

20 The comparison is based on a number of datival expressions that occur in both poems, in the *Paraphrasis* almost invariably as expansions on simple verbs of speech in the Gospel. Μάρτυρι μύθῳ occurs eight times in *Par.* (4.129, 4.247, 5.49, 7.188, 15.109, 18.150, 18.158, 20.123); and only once in *Dion.* 46.40 (where it effectively means 'tell me truly', a rhetorical demand or challenge, not a true appeal to witness). Μάρτυρα μῦθον occurs a further three times (*Par.* 3.158, 4.198, 14.42) and never in *Dion.* Μάρτυρι φωνῇ occurs four times in *Par.* (4.117, 7.28, 9.15, 20.79) and only once in *Dion.* 19.137, where the discussion in Vian 1997, 153 (= 2005, 576) exposes the difficulty of making it meaningful. There are two witnessing writing tablets in *Par.* 19.101, 20.140 and one in *Dion.* 21.305 (Vian 1997, 148, 152 [= 2005, 570–571, 575]). Conversely, there is only one witnessing silence (μάρτυρι σιγῇ) in *Par.* 4.150 (Jesus' eloquent gesture at the marriage at Cana—though for further instances of the theme of eloquent silence, see Rotondo 2008, 308–310, 'La voce del silenzio'), but four in *Dion.* (3.123, 16.214, 33.107, 36.380); they attest only to the degradation and trivialization of formulae in the latter poem, for the first two are used of animals, the last of Deriades physically prevented from speaking, and the third means (if anything) 'with silence as the only witness'.

21 The edition of the Gospel of John used here is that of Aland et al. 1968. All translations are my own.

22 12.151 f. ~ 12:38; 13.81 ~ 13:18; 15.103 f. ~ 15:25; 18.48 f. ~ 18:9; 19.127 f. ~ 19:24; 19.185 f. ~ 19:36.

not direct Nonnus a certain way, his preference is to present it to us as the spoken word—as prophetic voice or oracles that we can hear, big with solemnity, still live, still resonating.[23]

We are now better placed to address the most idiosyncratic feature of Nonnus' treatment of writing, the fact that it is endowed with voice.[24] As we have seen, this occurs in the 'cosmic preludes' in the *Dionysiaca* where inscribed oracles possess ὀμφή (above), and is especially prominent in the passage concerning Cadmus' invention of writing, where it rhetorically elaborates the notion that letters are representations of phonemes, a notion no doubt reinforced by the ancient practice of reading aloud,[25] so that letters were indeed readily conceivable (as ancient grammatical theory put it[26]) as corresponding to units of sound.

But the sheer prominence of scripture in the Gospel gives Nonnus far greater scope to develop the theme of 'speaking writing'. Indeed, it is precisely St. John who, among all the Evangelists, alone uses the figure 'as scripture said/says', with the verb λέγειν/εἰπεῖν. The idiom is found in the Pauline writings and elsewhere in the New Testament,[27] but not in the Synoptics, so Nonnus has chosen to paraphrase the very Gospel that gave him scope to develop the speaking properties of text.

In practice, where Nonnus bestows a voice on scripture—mostly in passages that involve renderings of 'as scripture says' or 'in order that scripture might be fulfilled'—he does so by making God, or the word of God, the speaker (*Par.* 7.145 f.); or by interpolating a speaker who articulates what the scripture says (12.66; 19.189; cf. also 18.49[28]). Scripture itself is vocal when it has an ὀμφή (7.162, 10.127, 15.103), or is identified as Psalmic and endowed with musical tones; otherwise, 'speaking' epithets are sometimes applied to books

23 17.43 ~ 17:12, where ἵνα πληρωθῇ is rendered textually, is perhaps more an apparent than real exception: in contrast to the other examples, there is no verbatim quotation of the Scripture, so that we are not, as in the other examples, *confronted* with a voice we can hear.

24 Rotondo 2008, 307–308, 'La Voce scritta'.

25 Emphasized by Rapp 1991, 29.

26 E.g. Σ Dion. Thrac. p. 32.19–20 Hilgard στοιχεῖον μέν ἐστιν ἡ ἐκφώνησις, γράμματα δὲ αἱ εἰκόνες καὶ οἱ χαρακτῆρες (a phoneme is the way something is pronounced, whereas letters are graphic signs); ps.-Ammon. *De adf. vocab. diff.* 122.

27 John 7:38, 42; 19:37; Rom. 4:3, 7:7, 9:17, 10:11, 11:2; Gal. 4:30; 1 Tim. 5:18; James 2:23; 4:6. Λέγει and φησίν in citation of named prophets: Rom. 9:25; with unstated subject, but referring in practice to God or scripture: Rom. 10:8, 15:10; 1 Cor. 6:16; Gal. 3:16; Eph. 4:8, 5:14; Heb. 8:5, 8, 13; James 4:6.

28 Nonnus expands John 18:9 ὃν εἶπεν in order to introduce a reference to John 17:12 (where Jesus spoke the words in a prayer to his Father).

(6.218 ἀσίγητος; 2.108, 8.22 θεόγλωσσος; 5.154 θεόρρητος). Most of these strategies are available to the church fathers as well. It is commonplace for them to make the prophets vocal, or to represent the Holy Spirit speaking through the Scriptures, and they also 'melodise' the Psalms.[29] But whereas they quite frequently endow Scripture itself,[30] or specific texts within it, with voice (though not ὀμφή,[31] which appears to be Nonnus' idiosyncrasy), and project that using active verbs of speech, Nonnus is reluctant to do this. The one apparent exception is the remarkable passage where Jesus lists those who have borne witness to him, culminating in the testimony of his father (John 5:31–39), which, as we have seen, Nonnus elaborates into *morceau de bravoure* on the inspired tongues of the scriptural prophets (5.145–149 and 154–158). Here, and here alone, do written oracles cry aloud (157 βοόωσιν[32]) with a voice of their own. But perhaps the phrase ὑποφήτορι μύθῳ (157 'with an interpreter's word', the epithet unique in Nonnus) slightly qualifies this with the implication that the words (as well as being a witness) are a medium or intermediary for a greater power (presumably Christ or the Holy Spirit) which speaks through them.[33]

The passage has other remarkable features. We should note the combination of an unusually physical and concrete designation of scripture (5.148 ἀμοιβαίῃ … δέλτῳ, 'an alternating tablet', apparently a codex[34]) with the equally striking anatomical reference to the mouths of the inspired prophets (147 φθεγγομένοις στομάτεσσι). Nowhere else in the *Paraphrasis* is scripture alluded to in such con-

29 See esp. Athanasius, *Epistula ad Marcellinum* (on the interpretation of the Psalms, esp. 2–3 *PG* 27.12C), using the verbs μελῳδεῖν, ψάλλειν, ᾄδειν καλῶς.

30 Verbs include ἀπαγγέλλειν (e.g. Athan. *Epist. ad Marc.* 2, *PG* 27.12B); βοᾶν (see below); κηρύσσειν and compounds (e.g., Justin, *Tryph.* 34.2; 76.3; 88.8; 89.9); (ἀνα)κράζειν (e.g., Clem. *Strom.* 2.6.26.3, 2.13.59.1); ἀναφωνεῖν (e.g., Athan. *Epist. ad Marc.* 3, *PG* 27.13A); ὑποφωνεῖν (e.g., ps.-Basil, *Hom. de virg.* 2.43, quoting Sap. Sol. 4:1).

31 The church fathers employ φωνή to mean 'passages of scripture', see Lampe s.v. φωνή 3b (sub fin.). Examples are readily multiplied from (e.g.) Gregory of Nyssa and the pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*.

32 Lampe s.v. βοάω 3c, gives examples with God, the Logos, or Holy Spirit speaking through the prophets, and with prophets themselves; for *texts* with voice, see, e.g., Justin, *Tryph.* 70.5 αὗται αἱ λέξεις τῆς προφητείας βοῶσι (the very words of the prophecy cry aloud); Clem. *Paed.* 2.12.120.2 βοώσης ἐκείνης (sc. τῆς γραφῆς) διαρρήδην (since she (i.e. scripture) cries aloud); ps.-Justin, *Quaest. et resp. ad orthodoxos*, p. 445 D Morel ἡ γραφὴ μεθ' ὅρκου βοῶσα (scripture crying aloud with an oath).

33 Agosti 2003, 525, ὑποφήτωρ 'contribuisce a creare la visione del Cristo "incantatore"'.

34 See Agosti 2003 ad loc. Δέλτος is used elsewhere in the *Paraphrasis* only for Pilate's inscription over the cross (19.101) and for the present work (20.140), not for Old Testament scripture. The observation that the latter is conceived in a largely un-physical way is reinforced by the fact that γραφίδες (5.156, 174; see Agosti 2003, 524) are letters, not styluses.

crete terms except for 7.191, where Nicodemus is adjured to seek for a prophecy and Nonnus concretizes this into an image of him turning over the pages of a book (ἀμοιβάδα βίβλον ἑλίσσων, 'turning the pages of a book once after another' ~ 7:52 ἐραύνησον). This, of course, is a particular physical object, not scripture as a whole. Moreover, every other use of στόμα in the *Paraphrasis* refers to living participants in the story, never again to scriptural writers. Nonnus is maximizing the contrast between the written and the oral, and will follow it up with an image of piercing sound, that of the trumpet, emerging from letters. Less flamboyantly, a later passage where people appeal to a scripture that forecasts a Messiah from the house of David (7:42 οὐχ ἡ γραφὴ εἶπεν ὅτι) is expanded into a reference to written text *combined* with an appeal to the divine voice (7.160 θέσφατα … σοφῇ κεχαραγμένα βίβλῳ, 'oracles inscribed in a wise book' + 162 οὐ τοῦτο θεηγόρος ἔννεπεν ὀμφή, 'did not the divinely-tongued prophetic voice say this?').

We can now ask whether Nonnus' expansions of the Gospel are a matter of mere rhetorical variation and *poikilia*, or whether he follows a set of associations for text and speech. Perhaps there is an element of *poikilia* in 12.151–166, where Isaiah is *both* vocal (152 Ἡσαΐας τόπερ εἶπε χέων πρωτόθροον ὀμφήν, 'what Isaiah said as he issued the first prophetic tidings' ~ 12:38 and 156 ὅττι καὶ Ἡσαΐας πάλιν ἔννεπε θέσπιδι φωνῇ, 'what else Isaiah spoke with his inspired voice' ~ 12:39) *and* textual (163 Ἡσαΐας τάδε πάντα κατέγραφε θέσπιδι βίβλῳ, 'all these things Isaiah wrote in his inspired book' ~ 12:41), all three lines rendering εἶπεν in the Gospel; there is a rationale for the speech-words in the first two cases because they introduce quotations (which we are thereby encouraged to *hear*), whereas the final one makes a separate point, that Isaiah had a vision and committed it to writing (despite in the Gospel's εἶπεν … καὶ ἐλάλησεν). The rationale for the elaboration of Moses into a multi-media prophet on the textual foundation of 5: 45–46 (where Moses ἔγραψεν concerning Jesus and will now be able to refute unbelievers) is clearer. Moses is principally a lawgiver (5.175 θεσμοθέτης); the people are threatened with the written evidence (174 ἐν γραφίδεσσι) with which he will incriminate them; but when appeal is made to his authority and the strength of his testimony it is, in accordance with the pattern we established above, something that enters through the ears (176f. εἰ γὰρ ἐκείνου / ἔμπεδον ἀπλανέεσσιν ἐθήκατε μῦθον ἀκουαῖς, 'if you had planted his word firmly in your unerring ears'). Two further passages can be adduced. At 7.160–162 ~ 7:41, which concerns the prediction of a Messiah from the house of David, and 10.123–128 ~ 10:34–35, where Jesus challenges the Jews to remember their scriptures and then asserts their authority and irrevocability—in both of which the text (γραφή in the Gospel) is written (κεχαραγμένα) and has an ὀμφή—it is hard not to discern the same pattern. Scripture is written when subjected to

scrutiny as a source, but shifts into auditory mode when the desired emphasis is on its authority and inspired nature.

Let us glance briefly at the Sibylline oracles, which are well known for their 'double modality' of speech and writing.[35] The Sibyl presents us with a text, but speaks with a resonant voice; her earliest depiction is in Heraclitus, who described her doom-laden voice resonating throughout the centuries (fr. 75 Markovich = 22 B. 92 D.–K.), but her oracles circulate—already for Aristophanes—in the form of written scrolls.

In our best evidence, the manuscript collection of Sibylline oracles, it is voice with which God inspires her,[36] and voice with which she communicates with the people (4.2 f.; 4.22 f.; 5.73 f.); though inspired, her speech remains in general her own (despite 8.360 ff. where she is a conduit for words spoken in God's first person). Sometimes she expresses herself like a bard, an oral performer.[37] The corpus's assumption that we are listening to a voice can be compared with the way Nonnus represents his prophets *speaking* when he quotes their words, and an important feature that the Sibyl shares with Nonnus is that voice (ὀμφή, φωνή) is the medium that is employed when the Sibyl is at pains to stress the veracity of her message.[38] Books and writing, on the other hand, are no guarantee of truth (for Homer writes wisely but not truly, 3.423 f.), but do tend to figure in connection with questions of literary authenticity—or forgery, for Homer stole from her books to write his own and then concealed them (3.419–432, 11.163–171). Necessarily, she refers explicitly to written letters (γράμματα and στοιχεῖα) when she employs *gematria* (where the number-values of letters in a name are totaled in order to produce a cryptic substitute for the latter) and its weaker sibling, the technique of referring to a person by the initial letter of his name alone.[39] She also does so in connection with acrostics, which are a device precisely intended to assure authenticity.[40] The assumption that the

35 Lightfoot 2007, 16–18.

36 2.3 θεσπεσίων ἐπέων πολυγηθέα φωνήν ('the joyous voice of inspired words'); 11.322 πολυήρατον αὐδήν ('lovely speech'); 12.295 αὐδὴν ἀμβροσίην ('ambrosial voice').

37 6.1 Ἀθανάτου μέγαν υἱὸν ἀοίδιμον ἐκ φρενὸς αὐδῶ ('from my heart I sing of the mighty son of eternal God, worthy to be sung'); ἀοιδή ('song') in 2.346, 11.324, 12.297, 13.172 f.

38 11.323 ἐτήτυμον ἔνθεον ὀμφήν ('veracious divine voice'); cf. 3.2 παναληθέα φημίξασαν ('having spoken the full truth'); 3.829 ὥστ᾽ ἀπ᾽ ἐμοῦ στόματος τάδ᾽ ἀληθινὰ πάντα λελέχθω ('may all these things be truly spoken from my mouth'); 4.2 f. ὅσσα μελιφθέγκτοιο διὰ στόματος μεγάροιο / μέλλω ἀφ᾽ ἡμετέρου παναληθέα μαντεύεσθαι ('the veracious prophecy which through honeyed lips I am about to issue from my halls'); 4.22 f. σὺ δὲ πάντα, λεώς, ἐπάκουε Σιβύλλης / ἐξ ὁσίου στόματος φωνὴν προχέοντος ἀληθῆ ('Heed the Sibyl, people, in all things, as she pours forth her true utterances through sacred lips').

39 1.141–146; 5.12 f., 14 f., 190; 11.18, 142, 154, 196; 12.16, 95–97, 165, 238 f., 270 f.; 14.54, 183, 205.

40 8.249; 11.17 f., 11.23.

Sibyl's authority is heightened by means of alphabetical legerdemain is in suggestive contrast with the *Paraphrasis*, where I have found no indication that Nonnus associated writing *per se* with enhanced authority. But perhaps the most significant difference is that *gematria* and the use of initial-letter reference is in need of interpretation. It both reveals—δηλοῦν is the repeated word in this connection—and conceals. Writing has revelatory power only for those who know how to read the signs.

The idea of writing and abstruse or mystic content deserves further note. In the *Dionysiaca*, when Cadmus brings the alphabet to Greece (4.259 ff.), he brings not only the technology of the alphabet but also the mysteries of Osiris/Dionysus. Slightly mystificatory language (4.264 πάτρια θεσπεσίης δεδαημένος ὄργια τέχνης, 'having learned the ancestral mysteries of a wondrous craft') seems to be chosen to suggest both the technology of lettering (in Graeco-Egyptian tradition its introduction was ascribed to the god Thoth) and its content, the 'milk' of sacred scriptures. A later passage also speaks of Cadmus' discoveries with a sort of pseudo-mysticism, describing them as 'the mystic rites of a well-tongued voice' (*Dion.* 41.382 εὐγλώσσοιο … ὄργια φωνῆς), although in this case we seem to have a fudge, not between the alphabet and the secret rites or texts of Dionysus, but between the alphabet and the arts of eloquence in connection with Berytus and its law school.[41]

No one at this point would relish a long trawl through the concept of the 'holy book' in antiquity,[42] though we should note the special place that Egypt has in the notion, perhaps also how the book came to be treated as an iconic object by the Neoplatonists. The idea of Hermes-Thoth and his sacred books no doubt lurks somewhere in the penumbra of the *Dionysiaca*'s passage on Cadmus; the relevance of Neoplatonism is harder to quantify. It was certainly known for its sacred books, and its influence has been frequently detected in both Nonnus' poems.[43] Perhaps the inscribed oracles of Phanes and Ophion are not foreign to the same broad milieu in which Proclus can credit books with revelations about the whole nature of God and man,[44] nor the 'unsullied' laws of Solon to the 'unsullied' *teletai* derived from salvific books, which Proclus mentions in one of his hymns.[45] Nor, in *Dion.* 2.192, where shooting-stars inscribe

41 Chuvin and Fayant 2006, 169 remark that 'c'est de l'invention de l'éloquence, et non de l'écriture, que Cadmos semble crédité ici', but Nonnus may be employing a sort of hendiadys, as in the earlier passage.

42 Colpe 1988; Curtius 1953, 302–347 (308 for Nonnus).

43 Most recently, Spanoudakis 2014, 30–37.

44 Proclus, *Hymn* 4.5–7; cf. also Corp. Herm. fr. xxiii Κόρη κόσμου, § 7 τὰ ἱερὰ τῶν κοσμικῶν στοιχείων σύμβολα (the 'sacred symbols of cosmic elements' are the books of Hermes).

45 Nonn. *Dion.* 41.383 θεσμὰ Σόλων ἄχραντα, cf. Proclus, *Hymn* 3.4, on salvation by means of

(ἐπέγραφον[46]) the air with flame, are we in a universe altogether unrecognizable to Plotinus, where stars and manifestations in the sublunar (and animal) worlds are signs and letters (γράμματα ἐν οὐρανῷ γραφόμενα ἀεὶ ἢ γεγραμμένα, 'letters constantly being inscribed in heaven or already written there') legible to the cognoscenti.[47]

But in the *Paraphrasis* these are at best side-issues to the Judeo-Christian scriptures, the sacred books par excellence. My concern here is the notion that they possess abstruse wisdom. Evidence can readily be adduced from patristic writers for the idea that 'it must be the work of divine wisdom to make plain the meaning of inspired Scripture, of that wisdom which is hidden in a mystery which none of the rulers of this world knew'.[48] Even before any attempt to penetrate the mysteries of their most profound or exalted content it was often simply a matter of working out what they meant and of explicating their figurative language. But where the patristic writers found unfathomable abysms of obscurity in the scriptures, I do not think that in Nonnus they are characterized by wisdom of ineffable depths or heights. And whatever Late Antique mystifications undergird Cadmus' texts, I do not believe that they are relevant to the *Paraphrasis*.[49] I do not think that Nonnus' scriptures even pose a particular interpretative challenge. They are no less sacred for all that; quite the contrary. They reflect the character of witness that they had in St. John's Gospel; and so far from trying to superimpose upon that any kind of Neoplatonic mystification, the quality in scripture that Nonnus most wants to emphasize is the instantly compelling and accessible quality of resonant voice. Let us recall the fact that when books are endowed with voice, they are generally the medium

ἀχράντοις τελετῇσιν ἐγερσινόων ἀπὸ βίβλων ('unsullied rites from books that quicken the mind'); ps.-Apollinaris' paraphrase of Ps. 138 (MT 139): 16 ἀχράντῳ σέο βίβλῳ (the 'unsullied' book in which God records all things) and Corp. Herm. fr. xxiii § 8 Ὦ ἱεραὶ βίβλοι … ἀσαπεῖς παντὸς αἰῶνος [παντας αἰῶνας Scott] καὶ ἄφθαρτοι διαμείνατε ('o sacred books, remain without corruption or taint throughout all time').

46 The same verb for the oracles of Phanes inscribed on the tablets of Harmonia (*Dion.* 12.34, 68), for lettering on a writing-tablet (*Dion.* 21.276), and for inscriptions respectively by Isaiah, Moses, and Pilate (*Par.* 1.87, 1.179, 19.101).

47 Plot. *Enn.* 2.3.7 (see Beutler and Theiler 1960: 426–427), 3.1.6, 3.3.6; Dornseiff 1925, 90; Livrea 2003, 273, on *Par.* 2.89 βίβλῳ.

48 Origen, *Jo.* 10.39.266 *PG* 14.318A (trans. A. Menzies in Cleveland Coxe 1896, 404); Cyril, *Dial. de Trin.* 1 *PG* 75.664A; id. *Ps.* 7.13 *PG* 69.753D (all cited by Livrea 2003, 273).

49 The discussions in Livrea 1989, 184, on *Par.* 18.151 'Da tutti questi passi … emerge che N. … sente il Cristianesimo come una religione del Libro mistico, secondo una concezione intrisa di paganesimo neoplatonico' and 2000, 273 f. 'Che N. abbia una concezione sacrale del libro e della scrittura anche in ambito pagano è stato ben visto da Gigli' use the evidence of the *Dionysiaca* to illuminate the *Paraphrasis*. I beg to differ.

for speakers or music. They are not 'signs', nor symbols in need of demystification (in the Neoplatonic tradition[50]), nor brain-teasers (in the Sibylline one). I submit that their function is not to mystify but to communicate.

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50 Cf. e.g., Iamblichus, *De Vit. Pyth.* 23 (103–105) on Pythagorean teaching through symbols (διὰ τῶν συμβόλων); this arcane, mystificatory, and exclusive tradition forms a complete contrast with Nonnian speaking books.

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CHAPTER 16

Shepherding the Past: Nonnus' Parable of the Good Shepherd between Pagan Models and Christian Exegesis

Margherita Maria Di Nino and Maria Ypsilanti

> The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I lack.
> In green pastures you let me graze; to safe waters you lead me;
> you restore my strength.
>
> Psalm 23

∴

1 The Shepherd as a Leader: The History of an Image

Shepherds, together with the imagery associated with shepherding, were familiar to Mediterranean and Near Eastern cultures.[1] Classical literature offers a wealth of pastoral scenes,[2] inspired by everyday experience, and it is only with bucolic poetry that the rustic world is subjected to the filter of literary idealization. In his capacity as an experienced person in charge of a group, the shepherd intuitively came to be used as a common vehicle in figurative representations of leadership.[3] This metaphor is found throughout both the Classical

1 This chapter was made possible thanks to the financial support of the University of Cyprus, which generously funded an internal research project on Nonnus' *Paraphrase*. In addition, our heartfelt thanks go to Gianfranco Agosti, Anna Lefteratou, and Enrico Magnelli, who read early drafts and offered insightful comments on it. Special thanks are also due to Filip Doroszewski for his particularly useful comments. They, of course, are not responsible for the actual content of the chapter and all remaining mistakes of fact and judgment are our own. Quotations from the Gospel of John are from Aland et al. 1968[2]. Quotations from Nonnus' *Paraphrase* are from Scheindler 1881. Unless otherwise stated, translations of all passages quoted in the paper are our own.

2 Bernsdorff 2001; Gutzwiller 2006; Sens 2006.

3 For the likely Near Eastern origin of the association, see Himmelmann 1980, 24 and 38; Halperin 1983, 99–101; Murray 1990, 3; Gutzwiller 1991, 211 n. 7.

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and the Christian traditions. The Homeric depiction of the king as a ποιμὴν λαῶν is well known,[4] but the metaphoric portrayal of Jesus as a shepherd plays a crucial role within Christian theology as well,[5] although the theological connection relies on the idea of protection, which is etymologically connected to the word ποιμήν,[6] while the Homeric image pivots on the two ideas of marshaling and ordering.[7]

The tenth chapter of John's Gospel features the parable of the Good Shepherd, which Nonnus' *Paraphrase* reflects fairly closely. On occasions, the Johannine text is repeated identically or almost identically,[8] while at other times there is only a general congruence with the content of the model. Despite this reliance on John, Nonnus allows himself a good deal of variation and innovation. By drawing inspiration from Classical sources, Nonnus gives refined poetic form to his prose model, while at the same time he applies a pagan lexicon and repertory of images to a Christian subject matter.[9] In this chapter we will look at the rendering of the Johannine Good Shepherd narrative by Nonnus. We will investigate his adaptations of vocabulary and imagery of earlier poetry, which mainly pertain to the rhetorical technique of *ornatio*, inherent in the paraphrastic genre, and we will also discuss his use of the techniques of omission and addition in his rendering of the parable. Our examination will also take into account the aspect of Christian exegesis, and it will trace echoes of patristic material in Nonnus' (re)phrasing.

Before Nonnus, Christian writers, including Ignatius of Antioch, Clemens of Alexandria, Origen, John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Cyril of Alexandria, in the East, and Augustine, in the West, have regularly commented upon this famous parable of John's Gospel, wholly or

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4 Fränkel 1921, 75; Croft 1973, 22–26 and 122–130; Murray 1990, 6; Haubold 2000, 17 (appendix A.I); Bernsdorff 2001, 53.

5 In addition to the fourth Gospel, the metaphor is deployed also in the complementary parable of the Lost Sheep (Luke 15.3–7; Matt. 18.12–14) and in Psalm 23, but God is portrayed as a shepherd as early as the Old Testament; cf. Barrett 1978^2, 373 f. on John 10.11; Petersen 1981, 137–139; Murray 1990, 4 f.; Hultgren 2002, 52 f.

6 Gutzwiller 2006, 5.

7 Hom. *Il.* 2.474–477; Gutzwiller 1991, 24.

8 The almost verbatim replication of the formula "I am the Good Shepherd," though not altogether surprising, is certainly striking. John's phrasing ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός (John 10.11 and 14) is rendered by Nonnus with εἰμὶ δὲ ποιμὴν / καλὸς ἐγώ (*Par.* 10.38 f.) and ποιμὴν καλὸς ἔφυν (*Par.* 10.49). The same goes for the ἀμὴν ἀμήν, with which the parable opens: Nonnus repeats it in the first line as a sign of stylistic-lexical adherence to his model, and inherits the prosodic idiosyncrasy of the two different scansions for α, for which see De Stefani 2002, 237 on Nonn. *Par.* 1.209; Agosti 2003, 454 f. on Nonn. *Par.* 5.89.

9 For representative examples of Nonnus' paraphrastic technique, see Golega 1930, 116–122.

partly, in the context of detailed commentaries on the Gospel of John and/or in other works of theirs.[10] Thus, for Nonnus and his audience, there was a rich exegetical and literary background against which the rephrasing of this parable could be set: the theological tradition, which discussed all possible symbolisms of the parable from many angles, on the one hand, and the epic, bucolic and epigrammatic tradition in which the motif of the shepherd and related imagery was diachronically dealt with, on the other. To re-present a narrative with crucial religious significance and one that was also receptive of multiple allusive references to the Greek poetic past should have been a particularly fascinating poetic endeavor.

2 Nonnus' *Paraphrase*: Consonances with the Model

One relevant point of contact between the *Paraphrase* and its model is the reference that each makes to sheepfolds. Ancient shepherds made use of various types of sheepfold during the winter and the dry season:

> The winter sheepfold is a roofed stone hovel called *merah*. It has one low door and no windows; therefore, by climbing up the fold "some other way" the robber could secure no booty. The roofless fold is called *hedherah* and is built of rough stones … to the height of five feet. Above the stone construction rises a high *seyaj* (hedge) of thorny branches, securely fasted between the stones. It is this hedge which is especially designed to prevent the "thief and robber" from climbing into the sheepfold.[11]

John is probably alluding to the roofless fold, given that thieves and robbers would have had no way to get into a stone-roofed pen other than entering through the door (John 10.1): ὁ μὴ εἰσερχόμενος διὰ τῆς θύρας εἰς τὴν αὐλὴν τῶν προβάτων ἀλλὰ ἀναβαίνων ἀλλαχόθεν ἐκεῖνος κλέπτης ἐστὶν καὶ λῃστής ("who does not enter through the door into the cattle dwelling but climbs up from another way, is a thief and a robber").

Nonnus' passage is similarly phrased (*Par.* 10.2–5):

> ὅς κε παραΐξειε θύρην εὐερκέος αὐλῆς
> ἐνδομύχων προβάτων καὶ ὑπέρτερος ἄλλοθεν ἕρπει

10 Elowsky 2006, 337–355.

11 Rihbany 1919, 211.

εἰς σκολιὴν ἀίδηλος ἐπηλυσίην ἀναβαίνων,
ληιστὴρ πέλεν οὗτος ἀνὴρ ληίστορι[12] ταρσῷ.

Whoever darts past the door of the well-fenced yard of the cattle dwelling in its inmost part, and creeps in, coming from above, from outside, unseen, coming to make an assault in a crooked way, this man is a robber and walks like a robber.

The phrase ὑπέρτερος ἄλλοθεν ἕρπει (line 3) obviously alludes to the same kind of fold as that featuring in John's image, and the focus is likewise placed on the need to penetrate the sheepcote in some other way. However, while John's depiction of robbers coming up from another place merely describes a general upward motion, Nonnus adds the verb ἕρπειν, which means both "go, move" and "creep." The likely coalescence of the two meanings stresses not only the difficulty but also the furtiveness of the robber's movements as he *creeps in* through the open roof. His wicked intentions are further highlighted by the phrase εἰς σκολιὴν ἀίδηλος ἐπηλυσίην (line 4): the adjective ἀίδηλος is documented as early as Homer in the passive meaning "unseen." However, comparison with line 32 (ληιστὴρ δ' ἀίδηλος) seems to favor the interpretation "destructive" or, at least, to suggest the possible interplay of the two meanings. The thief aims at an indirect assault: should he succeed in remaining unseen, the element of surprise will surely be in his favor. Stressing his harmfulness, meanwhile, contributes toward an effective psychological portrayal of the robber. Moreover, the combination of ἕρπειν with the idea of crookedness (σκολιήν) lays particular emphasis on the dangerousness and destructiveness of the Johannine "robber" and presents him in the most negative possible light from a theological point of view. Being associated with snakes also in the *Dionysiaca*,[13] this combination recalls imagery related to the guileful snake of the Old Testament, i.e., the devil in *Genesis*,[14] and thus further reinforces the ominous connotations of the presence of the cunning thief in the parable of the Johannine Christ. Σκολιός does in fact describe the snake (which is also often depicted as *crawling*) in accounts

12 The adjectival use of ληιστήρ stands out. Such morphological freedom is relatively common in Nonnus' poetic language; cf. Bintz 1865, 2.

13 At *Dion*. 7.328 and 26.194 the creeping snake is described as ἀγκύλος, an adjective designating crookedness and thus being equivalent to σκολιός. Cf. also Dion. Perieg. *Orb. Descr.* 122 ὡς δὲ δράκων βλοσυρωπὸς ἑλίσσεται, ἀγκύλος ἕρπων.

14 Gen. 3.1 ὁ δὲ ὄφις ἦν φρονιμώτατος πάντων τῶν θηρίων τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. For the guile of the snake, cf. also Eve's words at Gen. 3.13 ὁ ὄφις ἠπάτησέν με. At Gen. 3.14 the punishment of the snake is that it must crawl on earth from now on (ἐπὶ τῷ στήθει σου καὶ τῇ κοιλίᾳ πορεύσῃ καὶ γῆν φάγῃ πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ζωῆς σου).

about the serpent-devil as early as in the Old Testament[15] and continues to do so in later accounts.[16] Nonnus pictures the intruder as the ultimate evildoer and, consequently, as the direct opponent of Christ, the new Adam, exactly as the serpent-devil was the enemy of the first Adam. Of course, in the reversed situation of the Gospel, Christ will save mankind from the intruder who creeps in His αὐλή like a snake; thus, the new Adam will regain for man the bliss that he lost because of the original snake that sneaked into Eden, the domain that God initially reserved for man, the first Adam.[17]

Nonnus' poetic enterprise is shown at its best in cases that involve a more significant reworking of his model. One of the paraphrast's distinguishing stylistic features is his liking for poetry *per adjectiva*.[18] This device consists of a striking combination of adherence to his model and originality, since Nonnus repeats John's *ipsissima verba*, but modifies them with adjectives of his own choosing:[19] a technique that allows him to explain, interpret, and comment on his model.

2.1 *The Well-Fenced Yard*

The first instance of this strategy occurs as early as line 2f., where the Johannine ὁ μὴ εἰσερχόμενος διὰ τῆς θύρας εἰς τὴν αὐλὴν τῶν προβάτων ("he who does not enter through the door into the sheep fold" [John 10.1]) is paraphrased by:

> μάρτυρος ἀστυφέλικτος ἀμήν, ἀμὴν λόγος ἔστω,
> ὅς κε παραΐξειε θύρην εὐερκέος αὐλῆς
> ἐνδομύχων προβάτων κτλ.

15 Isa. 27.1 τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἐπάξει ὁ θεὸς τὴν μάχαιραν τὴν ἁγίαν καὶ τὴν μεγάλην καὶ τὴν ἰσχυρὰν ἐπὶ τὸν δράκοντα ὄφιν φεύγοντα, ἐπὶ τὸν δράκοντα ὄφιν σκολιὸν καὶ ἀνελεῖ τὸν δράκοντα. In his commentary on Isaiah (1.89.38–39), Eusebius elaborates further on this image, clearly associating it with the Genesis narrative and using the verb ἕρπειν to describe the snake's movement.

16 Cf. [John Damasc.] *Epistula ad Theophilum PG* 95.356.25 τί νῦν ὁ ἕρπων σκολιὸς ὄφις, ὁ ἀντίδικος τοῦ γένους ἡμῶν διάβολος, Phot. *Epistulae et Amphilochia* 234.13–14 πῶς εἰς τὸν παράδεισον εἵρπυσεν ὁ πονηρὸς ἐκεῖνος καὶ σκολιὸς ὄφις.

17 The antithetical correspondence between the first Adam and the "new Adam," Christ, in association with the snake, is found in the very Genesis narrative, where God announces that the snake-devil will be crushed by the offspring of Eve: Gen. 3.15 καὶ ἔχθραν θήσω ἀνὰ μέσον σου καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον τῆς γυναικὸς καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ σπέρματός σου καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτῆς· αὐτός σου τηρήσει κεφαλήν, καὶ σὺ τηρήσεις αὐτοῦ πτέρναν.

18 Golega 1930, 49–58; Agosti 2003, 157 and n. 12.

19 Golega 1930, 58.

> Truly, truly, be this word an unshaken witness, that whoever darts past the door of the well-fenced yard of the cattle dwelling in its inmost part.[20]

Nonnus combines the two phrases διὰ τῆς θύρας and εἰς τὴν αὐλὴν of the Gospel to produce the nexus θύρῃ εὐερκέος αὐλῆς. The epithet εὐερκής draws on the Homeric *iunctura* εὐερκὴς αὐλή.[21] Nonnus' use of the phrase in the genitive case and after the hephthemimeral caesura is consistent with the syntactical and metrical practice of the Homeric poems. Furthermore, although αὐλή is attested in Homer with the meaning "steading for cattle,"[22] in the *iunctura* εὐερκὴς αὐλή it always designates the courtyard that lies opposite the *megaron* of an aristocratic estate.[23] Thus, εὐερκής may here be more than a mere Homeric-tinged *epitheton ornans*: Nonnus' conception of the sheepfold recalls the Homeric portrayal of the heroes' court, and the identity of the Good Shepherd is likely to encourage such an assimilation.[24] In this regard, Hom. *Od.* 21.388 f. provides the most compelling parallel: σιγῇ δ' ἐξ οἴκοιο Φιλοίτιος ἆλτο θύραζε, / κλήϊσεν δ' ἄρ' ἔπειτα θύρας εὐερκέος αὐλῆς ("but in silence Philoetius hastened forth from the house, and barred the gates of the well-fenced court").[25]

In addition to sharing a syntactic construction, with εὐερκὴς αὐλή governed by θύρα, both passages act as the prelude to an impending massacre. Philoethius has just barred the doors of the courtyard, thus locking the suitors inside; an act that is to lead to their slaughter. Like the suitors, locked inside the court and about to be killed by someone more powerful than they are, the sheep dwell in the inmost part of the yard and will be killed if the person who is now darting past the αὐλή manages to enter it surreptitiously. The greatest discrepancy concerns the identity of the character who brings death: in one case this is the hero, who is about to regain his household and his power over Ithaca, and who therefore possesses positive force; in the other, it is a false shepherd, who is driven by treacherous aims and who thus possesses only negative force. This subversion of roles and shift in perspective is clearly part of Nonnus' reworking, in line with the complementary inversion of the polarity between inside and outside. In the Homeric passage, the suitors' presence inside the courtyard

20 Nonn. *Par.* 10.1–3.
21 Hom. *Il.* 9.471 f.; *Od.* 21.389 and 22.449.
22 Mau 1896, 2402.
23 *LfgrE* I 1550, s.v.
24 Αὐλή is the word used of God's dwelling in *Par.* 18.77; cf. Livrea 1989, 148 ad loc.
25 Trans. A.T. Murray.

will doom them to death, whereas the Good Shepherd's αὐλή protects the flock that dwells within.[26]

2.2 *The Hireling and the Wolf Attack*

Another pivotal theme of the parable is the distinction between the Good Shepherd and the hireling: whereas the former is willing to give up his life on behalf of his flock, the latter is ready to abandon the sheep to their fate and flee in the face of danger. The attack of beasts of prey has always represented the most dreaded type of threat for a herdsman and his herd, and Classical literature provides plentiful examples of assaults on the flock.[27] The traditional image of the wolf attack is exploited by John in order to underline Jesus' love for humankind, which is the flock He came to shepherd. John's version is very economical. He narrates in swift succession the main actions of the hireling, who *sees* the wolf, *deserts* the flock and *runs off*, and he frames these actions between references to the fact that he is a mere hired hand (John 10.12 f.):

> ὁ μισθωτὸς καὶ οὐκ ὢν ποιμήν, οὗ οὐκ ἔστιν τὰ πρόβατα ἴδια, θεωρεῖ τὸν λύκον ἐρχόμενον καὶ ἀφίησιν τὰ πρόβατα καὶ φεύγει—καὶ ὁ λύκος ἁρπάζει αὐτὰ καὶ σκορπίζει—**(13)** ὅτι μισθωτός ἐστιν καὶ οὐ μέλει αὐτῷ περὶ τῶν προβάτων.

> The hireling who is not the shepherd—he does not have sheep of his own—sees the wolf coming forth, leaves the sheep and flees—and the wolf snatches and scatters them—because he is a hireling and does not care for the cattle.

By contrast, Nonnus is generous with words, and paraphrases the two Johannine paragraphs in eight verses (*Par.* 10.41–48):

> ὁ δὲ μίσθιος οὐ πέλε ποιμήν·
> δήιον ἀγχικέλευθον ἰδὼν λύκον, ἅρπαγα μήλων,
> κρυπτὸς ἀλυσκάζων ὑποδύεται ὀξὺς ἐάσας
> βοσκομένων ἀφύλακτα πολύπλανα πώεα μήλων·
> κρυπτὸς ἀλυσκάζων ὑποδύεται· οὐκ ἀλέγει δὲ
> μήλων ἀλλοτρίων, ὅτι μίσθιος αὐτὸς ἀκούει·
> καὶ λύκος ἀγκυλόμητις ἐπέρχεται ἅρπαγι λαιμῷ
> μῆλα διασκεδάσας σημάντορος οὐ παρεόντος.

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26 The exegesis φυλαττόμεναι of ἐνδόμυχοι provided by *Schol. in* Opp. *Hal.* 4.182 may be relevant here.

27 Hom. *Il.* 5.137; 10.486; *Od.* 6.132; 17.472; Aesop. *Fab.* 158 and 164; Pl. *Rep.* 416a6; Xen. *Mem.* 2.9.2.

> The hireling, however, is not a shepherd. As soon as he sees a hostile wolf nearby, robber of sheep, escaping by stealth, he swiftly sneaks away, leaving unguarded the far-roaming flock of pasturing sheep. Escaping by stealth he sneaks away and he does not care for the sheep belonging to someone else, because he is called a hireling. And the wolf of crooked counsel comes upon the sheep with rapacious gullet, dispersing them, because no leader is present.

The whole description of the hireling's furtive escape is a Nonnian addition, as is the vivid depiction of the wolf's approach, which is intended to amplify his air of menace. No adjective modifies λύκος in the Gospel; by contrast, Nonnus uses both δήιος (line 42) and ἀγκυλόμητις (line 47). The former is a typical Homeric epithet for fire,[28] but is also applied to war ("destructive"),[29] and gradually acquired the broader meaning "hostile." Both senses are present here. The wolf is clearly *hostile*, but is also *destructive* and *dreadful*, in that his appearance introduces into the scene a fearsome presence that will bring about destruction, just as fire and wars do.[30]

The second modifier is a variant of ἀγκυλομήτης, the Homeric epithet of Cronos.[31] The semantic shift of this adjective from its Homeric meaning "crooked in counsel" to its later sense "cunning" is to be found in Hesiod: notwithstanding his general adherence to the Homeric use of the epithet, Hesiod also applies it to Prometheus.[32] The change in the word's meaning is particularly clear in Oppian's *Halieutica*, in which (in the form ἀγκυλόμητις) it modifies "fox": the animal of cunning par excellence.[33] Significantly, the adjective is documented in two further passages in the *Paraphrase* (11.215 and 234), which elaborate on the nature of the Pharisees plotting against Jesus. Given the great emphasis laid by Nonnus both on the idea of conspiracy and on the disreputable nature of the χορὸς Φαρισαίων, describing it as ἀγκυλόμητις sharpens

28 Hom. *Il.* 2.415; 6.331; 8.181; 9.347, 674; 11.667; 16.127, 301; 18.13; and Graz 1965, 108–112.

29 Hom. *Il.* 4.281; 5.117; 7.119, 174; 17.189; 19.73; 21.422.

30 Graz 1965, 112; *DELG* 271 s.v.

31 Hom. *Il.* 2.205, 319; 4.59 and 75; 9.37; 12.450; 16.431; 18.293; *Od.* 21.415; *Schol. vet. in* Hom. *Il.* 2.205 and 4.59c. The form ἀγκυλόμητις seems imitative of morphological pairs such as, e.g., δολομήτης/δολομήτις, for which, see Kopetsch 1873, 2.

32 Hes. *Th.* 546 and *Op.* 48.

33 Opp. *Hal.* 2.107 f. Already known to Philoxenus Grammaticus (fr. *548.5–7), ἀγκυλόμητις is not a new formation of Oppian's (*pace* Lohmeyer 1866, s.v.). Nevertheless, his general preference for the variants in -μητις must have been influential on later epic; cf. James 1970, 22 f. s.v. ἀγκυλό-μητις.

their psychological portrayal, in keeping with the Homeric use of the word,[34] and is consistent with Nonnus' liking for psychological details. Thus, the wolf comes forward *inspired by crooked counsel*, i.e., propelled by evil intentions and a strong tendency toward deceit.[35] The verb that is most typically used for the assault of a beast of prey is ἁρπάζω, and ἅρπαξ is not unusual as an epithet of wolves. Christian authors use the adjective in a metaphorical sense to describe negative human characteristics or to designate enemies of the soul, beaten off by the pastor.[36]

John's wording is fairly conventional in this regard (καὶ ὁ λύκος ἁρπάζει αὐτά, 10.12), but Nonnus reworks his model into the two phrases ἅρπαγα μήλων (line 42) and ἅρπαγι λαιμῷ (line 47): the *kenning*-like appositive "robber of sheep" strengthens the preceding depiction of the wolf by reference to the animal's characteristic habits, and points from the beginning to where the hazard lies. The modal phrase "with rapacious gullet," meanwhile, focuses on the wolf's most fearsome feature, to provide an evocative picture of the animal. Furthermore, the fact that the verb of motion ἐπέρχεται is set between a psychological characterization of the wolf and a physical reference to his throat, which is always ready for slaughter, creates a grim atmosphere, which is extremely effective in foreshadowing the impending carnage. Similarly, the way in which the hireling is depicted repeatedly highlights his lack of reliability. Framed by references to his status as a μίσθιος, this portrayal abounds in details describing how he flees, thus abandoning the flock to its fate. In contrast to Jesus who is light born from light,[37] the hireling acts in the dark, or at least tries not to be seen while escaping. The verb ἀλυσκάζω normally means "shun, avoid"[38] but seems here to bear the connotation "escape by stealth," which is ascribed to it by Hesy-

34 Cosset 1983, 274.

35 In this regard, one may compare *Christus Patiens* 3, in which ἀγκυλομήτης qualifies the serpent that deceived Eve.

36 Ar. *Nub.* 351 f., where the wolf serves as a metaphor for a plunderer of the public purse, and *Schol.* ad loc.: εἰκότως ἔφη 'λύκοι' διὰ τὸ ἅρπαγα αὐτὸν εἶναι. ἁρπακτικὸν γὰρ καὶ τὸ ζῷον τοῦτο, σχεδὸν πάντων πλέον τῶν ἄλλων ζῴων, ὥσπερ καὶ οἱ κόρακες τῶν ὀρνέων. For the *snatcher* wolf, symbolizing the enemy of the soul, cf., for instance, Basil *PG* 29.452.3 f. ὡς λύκος ἅρπαξ ἐφεδρεύων τοῖς ἀλλοτρίοις; Gr. Naz. *PG* 35.733.11 εὖ οἶδα τῶν ποιμένων τὸν τιμιώτατον … τοῖς ἅρπαξι τῶν ψυχῶν λύκοις ἐπινοοῦντα θήρατρα; John Chrys. *PG* 48.1034.12–23 ἐὰν ἴδῃς ἄνθρωπον, μὴ τὰ ἔξωθεν δοκίμαζε, ἀλλὰ τὰ ἔνδοθεν· … εἰ δὲ ἅρπαξ ἐστί, λύκος ἐστίν, 1038.2–6 ὅταν γὰρ εἰσέλθῃ ἐνταῦθα (sc. in the Church) ἄνθρωπος ἁρπάζων, πλεονεκτῶν … ἀντὶ λύκου γίνεται πρόβατον· ὁ μὲν γὰρ λύκος καὶ τὰ ἀλλότρια ἁρπάζει, 61.439.46 f. ὅταν ἁρπάζῃς ὡς οἱ λύκοι, and 62.600.16 f. παρέλασον … πάντα λύκον τῇ ἁρπαγῇ.

37 Cf. the formulation of the Nicene Creed φῶς ἐκ φωτός, borrowed by Nonnus at *Par.* 1.3 ἐκ φάεος φῶς.

38 LSJ s.v.

chius,[39] and frequently attached to the related word ἀλύσκω. The repetition of the phrase κρυπτὸς ἀλυσκάζων ὑποδύεται (lines 43 and 45), too, lays emphasis on the hireling's disloyalty. Furthermore, it may be relevant that κρυπτός also means "in disguise." Although the μίσθιος is clearly not in disguise, the adjective helps to create a vivid image, since it calls attention to the psychological attitude of the hireling, who sneaks away in the same deceitful and furtive way as one who succeeds in escaping by dressing in disguise.

At line 48, the wolf's attack is said to scatter the sheep, because no leader is present. This tableau is comparable to the Homeric simile in which the slaughter of Trojans at the hands of the Greek leaders is likened to an attack by marauding wolves, which scatters lambs and kids among the mountains (*Il.* 16.352–356):

> ὡς δὲ λύκοι ἄρνεσσιν ἐπέχραον ἢ ἐρίφοισι
> σίνται ὑπ᾽ ἐκ μήλων αἱρεύμενοι, αἵ τ᾽ ἐν ὄρεσσι
> ποιμένος ἀφραδίῃσι διέτμαγεν· οἳ δὲ ἰδόντες
> αἶψα διαρπάζουσιν ἀνάλκιδα θυμὸν ἐχούσας·
> ὣς Δαναοὶ Τρώεσσιν ἐπέχραον.

> And as murderous wolves fall upon lambs or kids, choosing them from out the flocks, when through the witlessness of the shepherd they are scattered among the mountains, and the wolves seeing it, forthwith harry the young whose hearts know naught of valour; even so the [Danaans] fell upon the Trojans.[40]

The detail of the dispersed flock is present in John ("and the wolf snatches and disperses them," John 10.12). However, both Homer and Nonnus characterize the wolves as harmful, and use an explanatory phrase to complement the idea of scattering. In the Homeric simile, the livestock is dispersed thanks to the shepherd's *foolishness*, while in the *Paraphrase* this occurs as a result of his *absence*. The way the idea is expressed in the *Paraphrase* lends the lines a strong Homeric color. The hemistich σημάντορος οὐ παρεόντος is a direct borrowing from Hom. *Il.* 15.325, in which the absent leader is, again, referred to as a shepherd. Nonnus repeats it verbatim and places it in the same sedes, but the strongest indication of an intertextual connection between the two passages is the fact that the phrase is documented nowhere else.

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39 Hesych. α 3307 L. ἀλυσκάζειν· ἀποδιδράσκειν. Cf. also *Schol. in* Hom. *Il.* 5.253 and 6.443, explaining the verb with ἐκκλίνω, ἐκφεύγω.

40 Trans. A.T. Murray.

2.3 *The Fair Shepherd and the Fair Flock*

Another idea that is central to the parable is the reciprocity existing between the shepherd and the flock. He knows his sheep and they know him. John's ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός, καὶ γινώσκω τὰ ἐμὰ καὶ γινώσκουσί με τὰ ἐμά (John 10.14) is paraphrased extremely closely by Nonnus (*Par.* 10.49–51):

> ποιμὴν καλὸς ἔφυν καὶ πώεα καλὰ νομεύω·
> γινώσκω δ' ἐμὰ μῆλα, καὶ ἠθάδα μηλοβοτῆρα
> ταῦτά με γινώσκουσιν.

> I am the Good Shepherd and I tend fair sheep; I know my sheep and they know me, their familiar shepherd.

The shepherd and the flock share the attribute of fairness. Although καλός (or the like) is a common enough epithet for both herdsman and flock,[41] the phrase is an exclusively Nonnian addition, which divides the line into two perfectly parallel cola: "I am the fair shepherd" and "I tend fair sheep." While the phrase πώεα καλά is distinctively Homeric,[42] and νομεύειν is the technical term for pasturing herds,[43] [Theoc.] *Id.* 27.38 τὰ δὲ πώεα καλὰ νομεύω provides a compelling precedent for line 49, whether or not we agree with Gow that καλά may be used adverbially in the *Idyll*.[44] However, the general congruence of the line with Verg. *Ecl.* 5.44 *formonsi pecoris custos, formonsior ipse* should not go unnoticed either. Nonnus' addition is intended to lay emphasis on the consonance between the Lord and the faithful.[45] Their mutual accord is further deepened by what follows: the concept of their knowledge of each other, which occurs in both the Gospel and the *Paraphrase*.[46] In Nonnus, however, the accusative με is expanded by the addition of the appositive ἠθάδα μηλοβοτῆρα (line 50), which conjoins a lexical preciosity—the Homeric *hapax* μηλοβοτήρ[47]—with ἠθάς, a common Nonnian modifier. Nonnus frequently alludes to the sense of familiarity linking flock and shepherd, which, however, does not exist in the case of

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41 Theoc. *Id.* 1.133; 5.140; 6.11; 7.87, 121, 132; 8.47; 9.10; 14.25.

42 Hom. *Il.* 18.528; *Od.* 11.402; 12.129; 24.112.

43 Hom. *Od.* 9.336; 10.85; Theoc. *Id.* 1.109; 3.46; Leon. Tar. *AP* 6.262.3 (*HE* 2263); Myrin. *AP* 7.703.1 (*GPh* 2568); Nonn. *Dion.* 38.170.

44 Gow 1952^{2}, vol. 2: 490 (ad loc.).

45 *Cat. in Cant. Cant. PG* 87.2.1688.26 f. καλὸν δὲ καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ καλοῦ ποιμένος πρόβατον.

46 The theme is documented as early as *Prov.* 27.23.1 γνωστῶς ἐπιγνώσῃ ψυχὰς ποιμνίου σου. Cf. also Gr. Naz. *PG* 35.441.37 f. and Cyr. *PG* 72.749.36.

47 Hom. *Il.* 18.529; *Et. Gud.* 474.20–22; *Suda* μ 930.1 A.; [Zonar.] μ 1356.6.

the false shepherd.[48] The shepherd's voice is well known to his sheep, who hear it all the time and have learned to follow it. By contrast, the foreign shepherd is new to them, as is his voice, which explains why the flock pays no heed to his ἀήθης αὐδή (line 18). Far from being simply a decorative addition, the appositive ἠθάδα μηλοβοτῆρα underlines the point that the reciprocal knowledge of sheep and shepherd stems from familiarity. It also mirrors the relationship between Father and Son, which is characterized in similar terms immediately afterwards (καθὼς γινώσκει με ὁ πατὴρ κἀγὼ γινώσκω τὸν πατέρα, John 10.15, and ὡς γενέτης νοέει με, καὶ ὡς νοέω γενετῆρα, *Par.* 10.52).[49]

3 Jesus, the Door of the Yard

3.1 *The All-Welcoming Door*

Besides portraying Jesus as a shepherd, John also presents Him as a door (John 10.7–10):

> εἶπεν οὖν πάλιν ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ θύρα τῶν προβάτων. (8) πάντες ὅσοι ἦλθον [πρὸ ἐμοῦ] κλέπται εἰσὶν καὶ λῃσταί· ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἤκουσαν αὐτῶν τὰ πρόβατα. (9) ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ θύρα· δι᾽ ἐμοῦ ἐάν τις εἰσέλθῃ σωθήσεται καὶ εἰσελεύσεται καὶ ἐξελεύσεται καὶ νομὴν εὑρήσει. (10) ὁ κλέπτης οὐκ ἔρχεται εἰ μὴ ἵνα κλέψῃ καὶ θύσῃ καὶ ἀπολέσῃ· ἐγὼ ἦλθον ἵνα ζωὴν ἔχωσιν καὶ περισσὸν ἔχωσιν.
>
> Jesus said again: "Truly, truly, I tell you that I am the Door of the sheep. All those who came [before me] are thieves and robbers. But the sheep did not listen to them. I am the Door: if one comes in through me, he will be saved and will enter and exit and find pasture. The thief comes in only to steal and slaughter and destroy; I came so that the sheep might have life and have it in abundance."[50]

Nonnus repeats the phrase εἰμί ἡ θύρα τῶν προβάτων almost *verbatim*, merely altering the syntactic dependency between "door" and "sheep", but he enriches the metaphor by adding the epithet πανδόκος (*Par.* 10.23): πανδόκος εἰμὶ θύρη προβάτων πολυχανδέος αὐλῆς ("I am the all-welcoming door of the capacious cattle yard"). The image of the door is consistent with the ancient idea of heaven,

48 *Par.* 10.10 f. and 10.17 f.

49 Barrett 1978², 375 f. on John 10.14 f.

50 Barrett 1978², 373 on John 10.11 "to have abundance, even superfluity (of life)."

which, from Homer onwards, was conceived of as "situated above the earth" and, of course, "entered by a door or doors."[51] The adjective πανδόκος expands on the original image by bringing in the two ideas of "universality" and "welcome." Jesus is also the door through which Christians must pass, and not merely the road that Christians must follow, as stated, for instance, at John 14.6 λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωή· οὐδεὶς ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸν πατέρα εἰ μὴ δι᾿ ἐμοῦ ("Jesus told him: 'I am the way, the truth and the life. Nobody goes to my Father, if not through me' "). He is the door through which anyone can enter, because it *welcomes all*.[52]

The adjective πανδόκος is often documented in Nonnus' *opera* within the *iunctura* πανδοκος αὐλή and its variation πανδόκος οἶκος, and serves as a sophisticated synonym for *spacious*.[53] On the other hand, in modifying the word θύρη, the adjective lays emphasis on the notion of hospitality, as it does, e.g., in two Pindaric passages referring to Elis and Delphi, both sacred places that, as such, are meant to *welcome all* worshippers:[54] see *O.* 3.17 f. πιστὰ φρονέων Διὸς αἴτει πανδόκῳ / ἄλσει and *P.* 8.61–63 τὺ δ᾿, Ἑκαταβόλε, πάνδοκον / ναὸν εὐκλέα διανέμων / Πυθῶνος ἐν γυάλοις. Further insights into Nonnus' lexical choice are provided by comparison with Aesch. *Sept.* 860 πάνδοκον εἰς ἀφανῆ τε χέρσον, in which "all-welcoming" is an epithet of Hades. The underworld is routinely conceived of as a place shared in common by all mankind, in that death is the universal destiny.[55] Nonnus resemanticizes the epithet within a Christian context, so that it comes to express the universality and the mercy of the heavenly kingdom, the gates of which stand open for all the faithful. This concept also crops up in *Par.* 5.33 and 14.2, in which πανδόκος modifies God's dwelling.[56] Moreover, it is also possible that Nonnus is filtering his pagan models through the traditional concept of the Church as πανδοχεῖον.[57] As a consequence, the pagan concept of an afterlife that will ultimately be the "recipient of all" loses its gloomy connota-

51 Barrett 1978², 372 on John 10.9.

52 On the theme in general, see Barrett 1978², 371–373 on John 10.9.

53 Nonn. *Dion.* 3.125; 16.304; 21.30; *Par.* 5.33; 14.6; 19.40.

54 For the hospitality of Apollo's temple in Delphi, see the order νηὸν δὲ προφύλαχθε, δέδεχθε δὲ φῦλ᾿ ἀνθρώπων given by the god himself to his priests at *Hom.H.Ap.* 538.

55 Lattimore 1962², 250–258 and *Schol. rec. in* A. *Sept.* 860.1 πάνδοκον· πάντας δεχομένην μετὰ θάνατον.

56 Agosti 2003, 369 f. and n. 238.

57 See Orig. *Hom. Luc.* 34.191.3 f. τὸ πανδοχεῖον εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, 194.1–3 πανδοχεῖον δὲ καὶ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν φησί, τὴν πάντων γενομένην δεκτικὴν καὶ χωρητικήν, Ath. *PG* 28.713.54 f. τὸ δὲ πανδοχεῖον ἡ Ἐκκλησία, [Chrys.] *PG* 61.757.3 f. καὶ ἤγαγεν εἰς πανδοχεῖον, τουτέστιν, εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν Ἐκκλησίαν, 62.757.44 f. εἰς τὸ μέγα καὶ θαυμαστὸν καὶ εὐρύχωρον πανδοχεῖον, εἰς ταύτην τὴν καθολικὴν Ἐκκλησίαν, and Cyr. *PG* 72.681.31 f. πανδοχεῖον δὲ τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν καλεῖ, τὴν πάντων γενομένην δεκτικὴν καὶ χωρητικήν.

tions, thereby becoming the loving Church that welcomes all. One can further suggest that Nonnus' addition of the point about the acceptance of everyone, through the adjective πανδόκος he gives to Christ-Door of the yard, stresses the idea of the enclosed but still capacious area in which salvation is possible, reminiscent, to a certain extent, of the Genesis blissful garden that Adam lost forever,[58] and thus the generality of redemption offered by Christ, the Shepherd and new Adam. Christ *saves* (*Par.* 10.35 ὅπως ἐμὰ μῆλα σαώσω, salvation in this line also being a Nonnian addition) and offers life to *everyone*, in contrast to the first Adam who brought death to himself and *everyone*.[59]

3.2 Kontrastimitation: *Jesus the Sheep-Protecting Door*

The epithet πανδόκος is reiterated at line 28, in which the bare Johannine phrasing ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ θύρα (10.9) is embellished as πανδόκος εἰμὶ θύρη μηλοσσόος (I am the all-welcoming, sheep-protecting door), which complements the idea of favorable reception with that of protection. Adjectives in -σοος are particularly congenial to Nonnus, who, on occasion, even coins new ones.[60] Μηλοσσόος is a Leonidean *hapax*: see Leon. Tar. *AP* 6.334.3 (*HE* 1968) καὶ σὺ τετραγλώχιν, μηλοσσόε, Μαιάδος Ἑρμᾶ, "and you, square Hermes, son of Maia, who protects sheep." While the intertextual link between the epigram and the *Paraphrase* speaks for itself, the epithet requires some exegesis. Hesychius defines μηλοσόη as ὁδός, δι' ἧς ⟨τὰ⟩ πρόβατα ἐλαύνεται (μ 1197 L.). This is an explanation that would suit the context: the metaphor of Jesus as the door through which his sheep are driven. It is also consistent with the general mechanism governing the composition of adjectives in -σόος with the name of an animal as their first element, such as βοοσσόος/βουσόος, ἱπποσόος, κεμαδοσσόος and κυνοσσόος, which are formed from σεύομαι.[61] Déniz, too, attributes the meaning "causing sheeps (*sic*) to move" to μηλοσσόος.[62] Nonetheless, Hermes' cultural connection with sheep and shepherding was well known[63] and, in his capacity as patron god of shepherds, Hermes neither *led* nor *chased* sheep, but *protected* them. Consequently, the

58 See above, p. 333.

59 Cf. Paul *1Corinth.* 15.21–22 ἐπειδὴ γὰρ δι' ἀνθρώπου θάνατος, καὶ δι' ἀνθρώπου ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν, 15.22 ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ πάντες ἀποθνήσκουσιν, οὕτως καὶ ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ πάντες ζῳοποιηθήσονται.

60 Scheindler 1878, 14; Kuiper 1918, 234 n. 1; Wójtowicz 1980, 268; Smolak 1984, 1–14; Accorinti 1996, 230 f.; Agosti 2003, 467.

61 *DELG* 997 s.v. σεύομαι.

62 Déniz 2012, 21.

63 For the god's role as patron of shepherds and his iconography as Hermes Criophorus, see Ley 1998, 427–430; Barbanera and Freccero 2008, 175 f. figg. 26, 26a.; *LIMC* V.1 311–314; V.2 figg. 260–297.

epithet μηλοσσόος must be formed from the verbal stem of σῴζω, as μελισσοσόος is.[64] Of course, Nonnus may be playing on the two possible etymologies to vary his model. That this is what Nonnus is up to becomes rather more likely, if we recall that he occasionally used strategies of "etymological inversions." That he did so, at least now and then, is suggested by the fact that he produces one such inversion on νηοσσόος (one who saves ships), the epithet used by Apollonius of Artemis and Apollo, which Nonnus reworks into meaning "driving (= pushing, urging forward) ships."[65] However, the idea of salvation is obviously pivotal to both the Gospel and the *Paraphrase*: see John 10.9 δι᾽ ἐμοῦ ἐάν τις εἰσέλθῃ σωθήσεται and *Par.* 10.35–37 αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ παρὰ πατρός, ὅπως ἐμὰ μῆλα σαώσω, / ἤλυθον, ὄφρα λάχοιεν ἀλωφήτῳ τινὶ τιμῇ / ζωὴν ἐσσομένην. The use of the Leonidean *hapax* certainly heightens the stylistic register of the passage. Its relevance, however, goes beyond the mere search for lexical preciosity, in that it provides a significant instance of *Konstrastimitation*, the kind of "imitazione contrastiva, che attribuisce a Cristo il potere che nell'originale era di un dio pagano."[66]

4 Omissions

Against the backdrop of Nonnus' general adherence to the Gospel, the absence of any element that is relevant to the Johannine text becomes conspicuous: one such omitted feature is that of the shepherd calling the sheep by name (καὶ τὰ ἴδια πρόβατα φωνεῖ κατ᾽ ὄνομα, John 10.3), a detail that "indicates the tender love of the shepherd for his flock."[67] Nonnus renders this passage with παρὰ προθύροισι δὲ ποιμὴν / πώεα ποιμαίνειν προκαλίζεται ἠθάδι φωνῇ (standing by the gate, the shepherd calls the flock forth to pasture with customary voice [*Par.* 10.10 f.]). Theocritus provides plenty of examples of shepherds addressing their flock and, on occasion, even calling the animals by name.[68] While it is true that the dialogic setting of the *Idylls* would hardly fit the discursive tone of the parable, the complete absence of this highly relevant motif in any form at all is nonetheless noteworthy. On the other hand, the choice of προκαλίζομαι may be of relevance here. This, in the *Iliad*, is used of a hero challenging other warriors to combat, and in the *Odyssey*, too, it can refer to hostile challenges.[69]

64 The epithet "guardian of bees" is a *hapax*, which Zonas uses to refer to Pan at *AP* 9.226.6.
65 A.R. 1.570 (with *Schol.* ad loc.); 2.927; Nonn. *Dion.* 23.136; 39.177; 40.344 and 458.
66 Agosti 2003, 77 n. 124. For the theme in general see also Laan 1993, 152–154; Accorinti 1995.
67 Rihbany 1919, 212.
68 Theoc. *Id.* 4.45–49; 5.1–4; [Theoc.] 8.49–52 and 67–70.
69 See *Il.* 3.18 f. αὐτὰρ δοῦρε δύω κεκορυθμένα χαλκῷ / πάλλων Ἀργείων προκαλίζετο πάντας ἀρί-

Challenging somebody does not necessarily involve uttering his or her name, but it is reasonable to assume that it usually does. In view of this, the apparent omission of the challenge can, in fact, be taken as a skillful reworking on Nonnus' part of the Homeric προκαλίζομαι[70] to describe the shepherd's affectionate *calling* his sheep *by name*, through which the paraphrast may also be making explicit an insight implicit in the Homeric model.

Even more striking are two omissions detectable at lines 20–23, paraphrasing the prelude to the parable of Jesus as Door. In addition to the absence of the styleme ἀμὴν ἀμήν, the reader cannot fail to notice that the word used by Nonnus to describe the parable is ἔπος. John uses παροιμία ("allegory"), which probably means "some kind of veiled or symbolic utterance."[71] At John 10.6 f., the Gospel merely records people's lack of understanding of Jesus' words, which prompts a second speech: ταύτην τὴν παροιμίαν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ἐκεῖνοι δὲ οὐκ ἔγνωσαν τίνα ἦν ἃ ἐλάλει αὐτοῖς. (7) Εἶπεν οὖν πάλιν ὁ Ἰησοῦς, ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ θύρα τῶν προβάτων ("Jesus told this parable and they did not understand the words he was telling them. Then Jesus said again: 'Truly, truly, I tell you that I am the Door of the sheep'"). These two concise verses are paraphrased by Nonnus with four detailed lines (*Par*. 10.20–23):

τοῖον ἔπος κατέλεξε παράτροπον· ἀμφὶ δὲ μύθῳ
λαὸς ἀμηχανέεσκε καὶ οὐ μάθεν ἐγγὺς ἀκούων,
Χριστὸς ἀσημάντῳ τάπερ ἔννεπε θέσπιδι φωνῇ.
Ἰησοῦς δ' ἀγόρευεν ἀριζήλῳ τινὶ μύθῳ·

Jesus recounted this unusual speech. The crowd was at a loss about the story, and they did not grasp its meaning, though they had listened to him closely. Christ uttered these ideas in a confusing, inspired tone. And Jesus pronounced a clear speech.

Nonnus emphatically conveys the bystanders' bewilderment at Jesus' speech by falling back on the typically Greek idea of ἀμηχανία. The paraphrast here provides a sort of Christian transliteration of the Classical idea, specifically in the

στους, 5.806 f. αὐτὰρ ὃ θυμὸν ἔχων ὃν καρτερὸν ὡς τὸ πάρος περ / κούρους Καδμείων προκαλίζετο, 7.150 τοῦ ὅ γε τεύχε' ἔχων προκαλίζετο πάντας ἀρίστους, and *Od*. 8.227 f. χολωσάμενος γὰρ Ἀπόλλων / ἔκτανεν, οὕνεκά μιν προκαλίζετο τοξάζεσθαι.

70 Nonnus is familiar with it, as shown by his "Homeric" use of the verb at, e.g., *Dion*. 17.230; 27.11; 29.302.

71 Barrett 1978², 370 on John 10.6. Although "in biblical usage there is little or no distinction between the two terms" (370), the fact that John's Gospel uses the world παροιμία, whilst the other synoptic Gospels employ παραβολή, may be relevant here. Cf. Smith 1937, 3–15.

form seen in tragic poetry. The people are at a loss because they do not comprehend the Lord's words. Thus, just as in tragedy, which "reasserts the limitations of man and his enclosure within a framework or an order which transcends his humanity and cannot be comprehended by it,"[72] Nonnus depicts the listeners as confronting the Savior and so displays their inability to understand. The traditional idea of the absence of any device that can be put into action is here reworked into a feeling of intellectual helplessness, which, however, brings along with it ideas of struggle and of the (frustrating) impossibility of understanding the full import of Jesus' words. This exegetical strategy of *unveiling* the veiled speech is exploited further at line 21, in which Nonnus explains, with the abundance of epithets that is typical of his style,[73] the reason why Jesus' speech is beyond His listeners' grasp. Although, at first sight, the two adjectives ἀσήμαντος and θέσπις seem almost to contradict each other, they contribute to the description of failed understanding. In Homer, θέσπις modifies either the song or the ἀοιδός himself,[74] and serves as a eulogistic label of the *divinely inspired* song or singer. By contrast, Jesus' words are literally *filled with the words of God*,[75] and their inner meaning bewilders the bystanders. Further stress is laid on the *veiled* meaning of the παροιμία by the opposition between the parable and the subsequent metaphor of Jesus as Door of the yard. The bare Johannine statement that Jesus started speaking again (John 10.19) is paraphrased by Nonnus through the acknowledgment that he pronounced a *clear* speech (line 23). The insertion of ἀρίζηλος (line 23) is not merely an example of Nonnus' abundant use of adjectives. It is also an attempt further to underline the complexity of the παροιμία by drawing a distinction between the *confusing* speech and the *clear* one.

5 Additions

5.1 *The Emotional Flock*

Nonnus' rendering of the parable also includes a significant addition to the model: namely, the reaction on the part of the flock when called by the Good Shepherd and the illegitimate shepherd, respectively. In the Gospel, the sheep know their shepherd and follow him or his voice. The shepherd cares for his sheep and they rely on him unreservedly (John 10.3 f. and 10.27):

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72 Segal 1963, 20.

73 Rigler 1850–1862; Bintz 1865; Kreutz 1865 and 1875; Giangrande 1960.

74 Hom. *Od.* 1.328; 8.498; 17.385. See, moreover, Koller 1965.

75 Bintz 1865, 21; Peek s.v.; De Stefani 2002, 165 on *Par.* 1.87; Agosti 2003, 407 f. on *Par.* 5.54.

> καὶ τὰ πρόβατα τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούει, καὶ τὰ ἴδια πρόβατα φωνεῖ κατ' ὄνομα καὶ ἐξάγει αὐτά. (4) ὅταν τὰ ἴδια πάντα ἐκβάλῃ, ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν πορεύεται, καὶ τὰ πρόβατα αὐτῷ ἀκολουθεῖ, ὅτι οἴδασιν τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ.
>
> And the sheep listen to his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he brings all his sheep out, he walks in front of them, and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice.
>
> τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἐμὰ τῆς φωνῆς μου ἀκούουσιν, κἀγὼ γινώσκω αὐτά, καὶ ἀκολουθοῦσίν μοι.
>
> My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

Such a dual identification reflects the everyday experience of a shepherd,[76] and is also valid from a Christological point of view (*Par.* 10.9–12):

> μῆλα δὲ γινώσκοντα περισκαίρουσι νομῆα
> φθογγῆς εἰσαΐοντα· παρὰ προθύροισι δὲ ποιμὴν
> πώεα ποιμαίνειν προκαλίζεται ἠθάδι φωνῇ·
> ἔκτοθι δὲ σταθμοῖο γεγηθότα μῆλα κομίζει.
>
> And the sheep, who know the shepherd, gambol while listening to his voice. Standing by the gate, the shepherd calls the flock forth to pasture with his familiar voice, and escorts the rejoicing sheep out of the farmstead.

Nonnus suffuses his depiction of the flock with sympathetic touches, and a level of characterization that is unknown to the Johannine text, but which recalls the anthropomorphic attitude attributed to flocks by bucolic poets. At line 9, he uses the word περισκαίρω. Skipping is not an unusual act for a flock.[77] Nevertheless, gamboling around to the sound of the shepherd's voice is a clear expression of cheerfulness, to be compared to the ending of Theocritus' *Sixth Idyll*, in which the dance of the heifers marks the end of the singing contest between Daphnis and Damoetas.[78] The significance of the image is strength-

76 See, e.g., Hom. *Od.* 9.315 f., in which Polyphemus whistles and his sheep follow him.

77 The simple σκαίρω is attested as early as Homer in reference to calves (*Od.* 10.412) and is also found in Theocritus (*Id.* 4.19).

78 Cf., moreover, Theoc. *Id.* 5.141 f. φριμάσσεο, πᾶσα τραγίσκων / νῦν ἀγέλα. Whereas φριμάσσομαι seems to mean "merely snort and leap" (LSJ s.v.), the *scholia* attribute a degree of joy to

ened by the participle γεγηθότα, which underlines how the animals *delight* in the shepherd's voice and company. However, Nonnus' depiction is also consistent with various characterizations of the Christian flock, which is at times reported either to rejoice or to be sad, as is seen, for example, at Gregory of Nazianzus *PG* 35.975.43–47: ταῦτα ὁ πενιχρὸς ποιμὴν καταρτίζων τὸ μικρὸν ποίμνιον, ᾧ χαίροντι συνευθυμεῖν καὶ σκυθρωπάζοντι συστενάζειν τῆς ἐμῆς ποιμαντικῆς ὁ νόμος ("this is what I, the poor shepherd (sc. says), who puts the small flock to rights. To rejoice with my flock when it is happy, and to lament with it when it is sad, is the law of my shepherding"). Even more relevant to Nonnus' portrayal is a passage by John Chrysostom, who uses the image of a flock leaping in happiness to describe the joy of the Church (*PG* 54.616.52–55): διὸ καὶ ἡ ἐκκλησία ἡμῖν ἀγάλλεται, καὶ σκιρτᾷ τὰ ποίμνια, καὶ ἡμεῖς μετὰ πλείονος προθυμίας τῶν λόγων ἁπτόμεθα. Ὅπου γὰρ συνδρομὴ ποιμένων, ἐκεῖ καὶ προβάτων ἀσφάλεια ("wherefore the Church, too, rejoices with me and the flocks gambol, and I turn to my sermons with greater eagerness. For wherever is a gathering of shepherds, there is also safety for the sheep").

5.2 *The Indifferent Flock*

Another instance of an almost human attitude on the part of the sheep is provided at lines 17–19, which describe their reaction to the voice of the shepherd who is an impostor. In both the *Paraphrase* and the Gospel, the necessity for Christians to flee from false prophets is expressed through the verb φεύγω. However, Nonnus renders the Johannine ἀλλοτρίῳ δὲ οὐ μὴ ἀκολουθήσουσιν ἀλλὰ φεύξονται ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, ὅτι οὐκ οἴδασιν τῶν ἀλλοτρίων τὴν φωνήν ("they will never follow a stranger, but will flee from him instead, because they do not know the voice of the strangers," John 10.5) as follows:

> ξείνου δ' οὐκ ἀίουσι καὶ οὐ δεδάασιν ἀκούειν
> ἀλλοτρίου καλέοντος ἀήθεα ποιμένος αὐδήν,
> ἀλλὰ παραΐσσοντα νόθον φεύγουσι νομῆα.
>
> They neither pay heed to a stranger, nor do they know how to listen to the unwonted voice of a strange shepherd, when he calls them. But they flee the illegitimate shepherd, darting past him.[79]

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the verb: see *Schol. in* Theoc. *Id.* 5.141–143a; 141–143c; 141–143d. This insight into the herd's joy is openly uttered by Longus 1.32.3, but note also Lucr. 1.14 and Verg. *Ecl.* 1.74.

79 Nonn. *Par.* 10.17–19.

Rather than being scared and running away from him, the sheep simply avoid the νόθος ποιμήν and dart past him. In doing so, they display a basic indifference to him. In addition, the verb παραΐσσω evokes passages that describe the herds wandering into meadows and pastures and may indeed be inspired by them.[80] Though Nonnus does not offer us a definitive lexical parallel in this particular case, it is reasonable to assume that the normal habit of the herd is here being reworked to exemplify the attitude the faithful should assume, when tempted by false prophets.

6 Conclusion

To conclude, Nonnus' rendering of the parable of the Good Shepherd represents a significant specimen of his paraphrastic technique, and also offers a few general insights into the way in which he transmuted his prose model into a refined poetic form. Nonnus was an author of very broad culture—one who employed the pagan tradition, its vocabulary and its thematic repertoire, in order to express Christian content. Nonnus' *Paraphrase* has undergone a systematic process of poetic embellishment, but his use of an elaborate and recherché vocabulary goes beyond a mere display of learning, and serves as a means of paraphrase. On occasion, pagan epithets are reworked to match the new Christian content: the exploitation of *Konstrastimitation* blurs the border between the two worlds and facilitates the incorporation of one into the other through lexical assimilation. While rephrasing his *Vorlage* with vocabulary drawn from the Greek poetic past, at the same time Nonnus inserts pieces of Christian interpretation into his narrative. The dangerousness of the Johannine thief is rendered in terms reminiscent of the Genesis snake, the rapaciousness of the wolf is informed by patristic accounts on the enemy of the soul and the protection the pastor offers and the door that welcomes all suggests the Church that accepts everyone in it and also the general salvation that the new Adam offers mankind. As regards rhetorical technique, attention should also be paid to the few omissions. Transposition, amplification, and abbreviation—also a type of omission—are part of the three essential procedures defined by paraphrastic theory,[81] which "demanded the exclusion of everything that was superfluous to the narrative," so that "repetitions were to be eliminated, redundancies to be pruned."[82] Yet, *brevitas* does not represent a real concern

80 [Moschus] 3.23 f.; Hor. *Carm.* III 18.9; *Epod.* 2.11 f.; Verg. *Ecl.* 1.9 f.; 6.39 f.; *G.* 3.139.
81 See, e.g., Quint. *Inst. Or.* 1.9.2 and 4.2.40.
82 Roberts 1985, 108.

for Nonnus, whose periphrastic technique tends instead toward amplification. Furthermore, while these details may be considered mere repetitions, they do have their relevance within the Gospel.

The image of the shepherd calling his sheep by name expresses the love and the care of the Good Shepherd, which represents one of the main focal points of the account. Likewise, the absence of the nexus ἀμήν, ἀμήν deprives the text of a typical Johannine styleme,[83] which Nonnus, by contrast, has repeated at line 1 in lexical homage to his model. One linguistic detail in particular that some may find a little disconcerting is the fact that this paraphrase of a parable should lack the very word *parable*; Nonnus' purpose in this, however, seems to be consciously to develop in colorful terms the related idea of *veiled speech*. Lastly, Nonnus adds details foreign to the Gospel, such as the attribution of human feelings to the flock. Through his anthropomorphic depiction of the sheep, he combines a few themes typical of bucolic literature with images used in Christian literature to convey his own ideas on how Christians should respond to the word of the Lord and ignore false prophets.[84] In doing so, he offers an artful mixture consisting of traditional epic vocabulary and formulae combined with the exegesis provided by the Church Fathers, thereby creating an extraordinary literary product, intended for readers whose cultural background would enable them to comprehend and appreciate both the Christian and pagan aspects of his text.

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83 Barrett 1978², 186 on John 1.51.

84 For Nonnus' biblical expertise in general see, e.g., Bintz 1865, 33; Golega 1930, 106–115; Cameron 2000, 176; Agosti 2003, 53 n. 52 (with bibliography).

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CHAPTER 17

Amplification in Juvencus' *Evangeliorum Libri* IV and in Nonnus' Μεταβολὴ τοῦ κατὰ Ἰωάννην ἁγίου εὐαγγελίου

Michael Paschalis

Amplification, the quantitative expansion of the source text, constitutes the most significant common ground for comparing the paraphrastic techniques of Juvencus and Nonnus, since abbreviation is common in Juvencus but rare in Nonnus and transposition displays each time its own peculiar features.[1]

Amplification in Juvencus and Nonnus falls into two major categories. The first category involves additions that presumably have an ornamental function and serve to "improve" and embellish the source text investing it with rhetorical and poetic features. The second one concerns expansions of the source text that, regardless of its stylistic features, have a clarifying function and serve to make it understandable. The latter category can be divided into two further types, narrative amplification and exegetical amplification. The Gospel narrative paraphrased by Juvencus and Nonnus, both in the original Greek and in the Old Latin versions, gives only the bare essentials of a story and is occasionally elliptical and displays abrupt transitions. Hence amplification becomes necessary and serves the double purpose of filling in narrative gaps (first type) and theological gaps (second type).

Individual studies of Juvencus and Nonnus as well as occasional comments on their amplification practices have focused on two of the above-mentioned aspects: rhetorical-poetic embellishment and scriptural exegesis. These are commonly understood as contrasting features, the former existing for its own sake and the latter serving biblical teaching.[2] What is usually left unspoken is that the introduction of pagan elements in a verse paraphrase of the Bible

1 On the techniques of biblical paraphrase, see in general Herzog 1975; Roberts 1985 (with the reservations expressed by Maslbary 1985); Consolino 2005. On Juvencus and Latin paraphrase, see further Kartschoke 1975; Simonetti Abbolito 1985 and 1986; Campagnuolo 1993; Colombi 1997; Green 2006. Regarding Nonnus see further Livrea 1989, 54–65; Accorinti 1996, 45–50; Livrea 2000, 92–105; Agosti 2003, 149–174; Spanoudakis 2014, 68–87; Massimilla 2016; Johnson 2016.

2 Cf. Widmann 1905, 14 on Juvencus: "Poeta Iuvencus certat cum theologo Iuvenco."

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may have carried confusing or contradictory messages. Casting Christian content in pagan form was hardly a neutral paraphrastic technique, since pagan form evoked well-known pagan contexts that had not yet undergone Christian exegesis. The problem is more prominent in Juvencus than in Nonnus: the *Evangeliorum libri quattuor* is the first substantial Christian Latin poem in classical form, while Nonnus, writing approximately two centuries later, profited enormously from a huge body of scriptural exegesis written in the meantime. At about 329 AD when Juvencus flourished, Virgil's *Aeneid* and the Bible were perhaps the two most widely studied books in the Western Roman Empire;[3] and since Juvencus recognized and promoted the authority of Virgil through the appropriation of the Roman poet's works, the learned reader of the paraphrase of the four Gospels, whom the paraphrase was intended to attract or train, would have had to balance the authority of the Bible against the authority of Virgil.

This particular aspect of biblical paraphrase will not, however, concern me here. Basing my evidence on a comparison of passages drawn from the Latin and Greek paraphrase of the resurrection of Lazarus (Juvencus 4.306–408; Nonnus, *Paraphrasis* 11) I intend to argue that Juvencus favors the embellishing aspect of amplification while Nonnus favors its clarifying aspect in both types. To put it differently, Juvencus allows little space to clarification and a lot more space to stylistic improvement; by contrast, in Nonnus additions that are purely ornamental are few—actually some additions may be considered ornamental until a study shows that this assumption is inaccurate. There is an ongoing debate as to the extent of the presence of exegetical expansion in Juvencus.[4] Even taking into account Deproost's analysis of the Lazarus episode in Juvencus, which offers a rich exegetical commentary,[5] the difference with Nonnus' paraphrase of the same episode is enormous: Spanoudakis' commen-

3 Green 2006, xi.

4 For a survey of views on this issue see Santorelli in Canali 2011, 29–31. Recent studies include Green 2007 and Palla 2008. I would be inclined to agree with the concluding remarks of Roberto Palla on Juvencus: "Possiamo ritenere l'opera di Giovenco e quella dei suoi epigoni una forma di esegesi? Senza dubbio qualche spunto esegetico qua e là si trova, in forma varia da autore ad autore; ognuno da le spiegazioni che vuole nel modo che vuole: Giovenco propone occasionalmente qualche brevissima aggiunta, limitata ad una parola o poco piu" (2008, 227).

5 Deproost 2000. According to Roberts, "The raising of Lazarus carries a soteriological connotation, the release from spiritual death, and by so doing looks forward to the account of Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection that follows in the same book" (1985, 152). This is certainly true as regards the juxtaposition of the two accounts but I doubt that soteriological overtones can be extracted from Juvencus' poetic periphrases for death, as Roberts argues.

tary provides ample evidence of the rich theological background to most lines, phrases, and even single words of *Par.* 11.[6]

The difference is greater as regards narrative amplification. The practice of filling in narrative gaps in the Gospel narrative is extremely limited in Juvencus but constitutes a typical and prominent feature of Nonnus' paraphrase of *The Gospel of John*. Through the addition of new elements in the source text, Nonnus clarifies the sense of individual words and phrases; supplies missing details of the narrative; provides the reasons for events and the motives behind attitudes and actions, etc. Hence Nonnus offers a detailed narrative with smooth transitions, while in Juvencus we observe the exact opposite: his narrative retains the gaps of the source text and sometimes increases their number through deliberate omissions. According to Roberts the following two tendencies coalesce in Juvencus (and especially in later Christian epic): the tendency to abbreviate the narrative content of the biblical original and the tendency to amplify what in that bare narrative framework is susceptible to poetic or moralizing elaboration.[7] My own research has shown that, as regards Juvencus, the second tendency applies mainly to poetic elaboration.

Comparisons of Nonnus and Juvencus have largely tended to ignore their different practices concerning narrative amplification. The same applies to independent studies of Juvencus and especially of Nonnus, where narrative amplification has not received systematic attention. In my view there are two reasons for this lack of interest. The first is that narrative amplification is considered less important and almost insignificant vis-à-vis rhetorical-poetic amplification and exegetical amplification. The second is that especially in Nonnus narrative amplification frequently overlaps with exegetical amplification, because of the rich theological background of the *Paraphrasis*. And since interest in extracting exegetical meaning from every word and phrase added to *The Gospel of John* remains vivid and keeps increasing, theological amplification tends to absorb narrative amplification. Hence additions supplying purely narrative details are either ignored or invested with exclusively exegetical meaning.

As evidence for the lack of scholarly interest in narrative amplification I could adduce the comparison by Anton Hilhorst of the cleansing of the Temple (John 2.13–25) in Juvencus 2.153–176 and Nonnus 2.70–120.[8] In discussing amplification Hilhorst does not point out any substantial difference between the two writers, though he records more examples in Nonnus' Paraphrase. It is only in additions that have "an emotional ring" that he distinguishes Nonnus'

6 Spanoudakis 2014.
7 Roberts 1985, 164.
8 Hilhorst 1993.

from Juvencus' paraphrastic technique. In his view some of Nonnus' emotional additions "fail to confer a dramatic force in the narrative probably (because) the effect of the violent wording is choked in its own verbosity."[9] His concluding judgment is in favor of the Roman poet: "Juvencus is the more subtle poet. In general, he has the advantage of conciseness. On the other hand, *if* he puts in his ornaments, he does so where they are really effective."[10]

Juvencus' and Nonnus' paraphrase of the passage on money changers will suffice to elucidate my argument as regards their respective attitude toward narrative amplification. Juvencus paraphrases the Old Latin[11] *nummularios sedentes* ("the money-changers sitting," John 2.14) as *pars inhians nummis artem numerare uacabat* ("some sat as money-changers, hungry for gain", 2.157). Hilhorst comments on the line as follows: "The money changers who in John did no more than 'sit', are depicted by Juvencus as 'peering with parted lips at the coins, absorbed in counting the profit'." As a matter of fact what Juvencus does is amplify a single aspect of the money-changing activity going on inside the Temple into a vivid poetic and probably Virgilian image.[12] By contrast Nonnus expands John 2.14 καὶ τοὺς κερματιστὰς (rendered through the high-styled periphrasis κερμοδότην χορὸν) into a comprehensive description of the money-changing business (*Par.* 2.74–77):

ἑζόμενον δὲ
κερμοδότην χορὸν εὗρε φιλοπλούτοιο τραπέζης·
καὶ πολὺν ἑσμὸν ὄπωπε φιλέμπορον ὑψόθι θώκων
ὤνιον ἔργον ἔχοντα.[13]

and cash dispensers, too,
set up behind the greedy money changers' bench;
and saw a throng of businessmen perched over all,
engaged in trade and sales.[14]

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9 Hilhorst 1993, 73.
10 Hilhorst 1993, 75.
11 The text of Juvencus is by Huemer 1891 and the translation by Scott McGill 2016. Old Latin quotations are from the Codex Veronensis (Jülicher, Matzkow, and Aland 1963, 119–133). On the Old Latin Gospels, see Burton 2000. Which particular version, or indeed which variant of it, Juvencus used cannot be stated with any certainty.
12 Hilhorst and others compare Dido at *Aen.* 4.63–64 *pecudumque reclusis / pectoribus inhians spirantia consulit exta.*
13 The text is that of Livrea 2000.
14 The translation is by Prost 2003.

Nonnus introduces details that involve the transactions of buying and selling, the great number of the traders, the profit they gain (the epithet φιλοπλούτοιο covers the ground of greed exploited by Juvencus) and even a realistic element like where the traders are seated. The characterization of their group as πολὺν ἑσμόν (a great swarm) suggests great numbers and busy activity and in addition associates them with the preceding list of animals on sale inside the temple.

I now turn to the comparative analysis of the first of two passages from the Lazarus episode in Juvencus[15] and Nonnus,[16] starting with the source text (John 11.17) and its Old Latin translation.

When Jesus arrives at Bethany he finds that Lazarus has already been four days in the tomb: Ἐλθὼν οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς εὗρεν αὐτὸν τέσσαρας ἡμέρας ἤδη ἔχοντα ἐν τῷ μνημείῳ; *Venit ergo Iesus et inuenit eum quattuor dies iam in monumento habentem*. Juvencus repeats the basic information of the source text without mentioning the tomb. Through an addition longer than the original text he shifts attention to Lazarus' home and dramatizes the grief and mourning that has overcome his sisters (4.333–335):

Iamque aderat Christus, fuerat sed forte sepulto
quarta dies, mersasque atris de morte tenebris
germanas luctus lacrimosaque tecta tenebant.

Christ had now come. But Lazarus was buried
four days before; grief and a mourning house
shut in his sisters, plunged in death's black shadows.

Juvencus' expansion of the source text conforms to what was said above: it focuses on a particular point of the story, in this case female grief, and elaborates it in a poetic and more properly Virgilian fashion.[17]

Nonnus' Paraphrase follows a completely different strategy, though it covers the exact same number of lines (11.60–62):[18]

15 For a comprehensive comparison of the Lazarus episode in Nonnus and Juvencus, see now Whitby 2016.

16 The text and translation of *Par.* 11 are derived from Spanoudakis 2014.

17 Deproost 2000, 135 compares passages from *Aeneid* 2 describing the situation at Troy during the night the city fell to the Achaeans (486–488, 679, 757).

18 This is significant considering that Nonnus' paraphrase of the Lazarus episode is more than twice as long as Juvencus'.

ἐλθὼν δ' ὀψικέλευθος ἄναξ ἐς ἐθήμονα κώμην,
Λάζαρον ἄπνοον εὗρε χυτῇ στρωθέντα κονίῃ,
τέτρατον ἦμαρ ἔχοντα γοήμονος ἔνδοθι τύμβου.

When the Lord arrived belated to the wonted village he found Lazarus without breath laid on a mound of dust, having been four days inside the mournful tomb.

If the narrative meaning of the adjectives ὀψικέλευθος, ἐθήμονα, and γοήμονος were expanded, we would end up with the following paraphrase of the source text: Jesus *used to* lodge in the house of Lazarus *every time he visited Bethany*, but this particular time he arrived *too late* to find Lazarus alive; he was lying dead inside the tomb[19] and *lamented* by his sisters. The adjective ἐθήμονα qualifying the village of Bethany acquires further significance in light of the next lines of John 11 (18–19) and *Par.* 11 (63–65):

ἦν δὲ ἡ Βηθανία ἐγγὺς τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων ὡς ἀπὸ σταδίων δεκαπέντε. καὶ πολλοὶ ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐληλύθεισαν πρὸς τὴν Μάρθαν καὶ Μαριὰμ ἵνα παραμυθήσωνται αὐτὰς περὶ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτῶν.

Now Bethany was close to Jerusalem, about fifteen stadia apart, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary, to console them regarding their brother.

Βηθανίη δ' ἑκὰς ἦεν ἀπ' ἄστεος Ἱροσολύμων
ὡς τρισσῶν σταδίων καὶ δώδεκα. καὶ πολὺς ἕρπων
λαὸς Ἰουδαίων ὑπεδύσατο γείτονα κώμην.

Bethany lay about three stades and twelve away from the city of Jerusalem, and many people of the Jews had gradually made their way into the neighboring village.

Nonnus not only retains the reference to the distance between Bethany and Jerusalem but proceeds to reduce it to three stades and twelve, approximately 1/5 of the distance. This distance is even shorter than the figure given by Josephus (*Ant.* 20.169): he records the distance to the Mount of Olives, near which

19 On the exegetical significance of ἄπνοον and χυτῇ στρωθέντα κονίῃ, see Spanoudakis 2014, ad loc.

Bethany may have been located, to five stades.[20] Nonnus reinforces the shortness of distance with the epithet "neighboring" (γείτονα) qualifying the village. The proximity of Bethany to Jerusalem serves to explain, among other things, why in the Gospel narrative and the *Paraphrasis* "*many* of the Jews" came to console Martha and Mary for the loss of their brother.[21] Upon arriving at Bethany the crowd of the Jews "went over to the house of 'ever-welcoming' (φιλοξείνιο) Martha and Mary" (*Par.* 11.66–67). Most importantly, the additions regarding the proximity of Bethany and Jerusalem and the hospitality of the sisters point backward to Jesus' earlier visits to Bethany (ἐς ἐθήμονα κώμην), where he used to be received by the "hospitable sisters" (*Par.* 11.19 φιλοξείνους γυναῖκας).

There is a clear-cut contrast with Juvencus on all these points: his paraphrase of the same passage omits the reference to the distance between Bethany and Jerusalem altogether and does not qualify the number of Jews who came to Bethany, though both elements are found in the Old Latin translation.[22]

The epithet ὀψικέλευθος refers the reader to an earlier passage of John and Nonnus' *Paraphrasis*. In John 11.6–7 and in the Old Latin translation Jesus *lets two days pass* after receiving the news of Lazarus' illness:

> ὡς οὖν ἤκουσεν ὅτι ἀσθενεῖ, τότε μὲν ἔμεινεν ἐν ᾧ ἦν τόπῳ δύο ἡμέρας, ἔπειτα μετὰ τοῦτο λέγει τοῖς μαθηταῖς· ἄγωμεν εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν πάλιν.
>
> When therefore he heard that he was sick, at that time he actually remained in the place in which he was for two days. Then after this he says to the disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."
>
> Ut ergo audiuit quia infirmatur, tunc quidem ma⟨n⟩sit Iesus in eodem loco duos dies: deinde post haec dicit discipulis suis Eamus in Iudaeam iterum.
>
> When therefore he heard that he was sick, at that time Jesus remained in the same place for two days. Then after this he says to the disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

20 Keener 2003, 842.

21 Cf. Keener: "John points out Bethany's proximity to Jerusalem (11:18) to underline the risk of hostility Jesus was embracing to serve Lazarus (10:39; 11:8), but also to identify the many 'Judeans' who came to visit Martha and Mary as the theological equivalent of Jerusalemites, who will again (7:43; 9:16; 10:19) be divided by Jesus' ministry (11:46–47)" (2003, 842).

22 18 *Erat autem Bethania iuxta Hierosolyma quasi stadiis XV.* 19 *Multi autem ex Iudaeis uenerant ad Martham et Mariam, ut consolarentur eas de fratre suo.*

According to the patristic exegesis of the Gospel passage the delay was due to the fact that Christ's plan was not to heal Lazarus but to raise him from the dead.[23] This crucial detail of Jesus prolonging his stay for two days, which has also a narrative function, is retained and expanded in Nonnus (*Par.* 11.21–26):

> ἐν δ᾽ ἄρα χώρῳ
> ὡς κλύεν ἀγγελίης, ὅτι Λάζαρος Ἄϊδι νεύων
> κέκλιτο νουσαλέῳ πεπεδημένος ἅψεα δεσμῷ,
> διχθαδίης παράμειβε τελεσσιμόρου δρόμον ἠοῦς.
> καὶ μετὰ δίζυγον ἦμαρ ἑοῖς ἀγόρευε μαθηταῖς·
> 'ἴομεν εἰς κλυτὸν οὖδας Ἰουδαίων πάλιν ἀνδρῶν.'

In that place, when he heard the news that Lazarus, sinking towards Hades, was lying fettered in his limbs by a morbid bond, he let a double course of fate-sealing dawn go by. And after this twofold day he announced to his disciples: "Let us go back to the renowned land of Judean men."

In comparison with the source text, Nonnus emphasizes the extreme graveness of Lazarus' condition, which would have required immediate action, and thus enhances the significance of the delay. Furthermore, the passage of two days is not recorded only once, as in John, but repeated (καὶ μετὰ δίζυγον ἦμαρ, replacing ἔπειτα μετὰ τοῦτο in the source text). Finally, its fatal consequences for Lazarus are highlighted through the hapax epithet τελεσσιμόρου.

By contrast, Juvencus omits the reference to Jesus' intentional two-day delay before going to Bethany. The omission creates a significant gap in his account not only from a theological but also from a narrative viewpoint, in the sense that the complaints of Martha (340–341) and Mary (367–368) that Jesus did not arrive in time to save Lazarus are voiced without the reader's prior knowledge of Jesus' plan not to heal but to resurrect their brother.

The second passage I would like to compare is the description of Lazarus' tomb and Jesus' command that the stone closing its entrance be removed. I quote the source text (John 11.38–39) followed by Nonnus' paraphrase (11.133–142):

> ἦν δὲ σπήλαιον, καὶ λίθος ἐπέκειτο ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ. λέγει ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ἄρατε τὸν λίθον. λέγει αὐτῷ ἡ ἀδελφὴ τοῦ τεθνηκότος Μάρθα· Κύριε, ἤδη ὄζει· τεταρταῖος γάρ ἐστι.

23 Spanoudakis 2014 on *Par.* 11.24c.

> And there was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus says, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the one who was dead, says to him, "Lord, by now he smells; it is the fourth day."

> … καὶ ἤιεν ἐγγύθι τύμβου.
> καὶ χθόνιον σπέος ἦεν ἔσω γλαφυροῖο μελάθρου,
> καὶ λίθος ἀντιτύποιο φέρων μίμημα θυρέτρου,
> ἀμφιπαγής, ἰσόμετρος ἐρείδετο χάσματι τύμβου.
> Ἰησοῦς δ᾽ ἐκέλευσεν ἄναξ πειθήμονι λαῷ·
> 'λᾶαν ὑπωροφίοιο μεταστήσασθε μελάθρου.'
> Μάρθα δὲ τεθνειῶτος ὁμόγνιος ἴαχε φωνήν·
> 'κείμενον ἀντιθύρετρον ἔα λίθον· οἰγομένου γάρ
> χάσματος οὐδαίοιο δυσήνεμος ἔρχεται ὀδμή,
> ὅττι τεταρταῖος τελέθει νέκυς ἔνδοθι τύμβου.'

> … and he came close to the tomb. There was an underground grotto within a hollowed chamber and a stone corresponding exactly to the doorway, fitting on all sides and of equal dimensions, leaned against the opening of the tomb. Jesus the Lord ordered the readily compliant people: "Remove the stone from the roof-covered chamber." But Martha, the sister of a dead man, cried out: "Leave the stone lying against the doorway; for if it is opened an ill-wafted stench will blow from the underground opening, because he has been dead four days in the tomb."

In Nonnus' description the large stone (λίθος) barring the entrance to the tomb is assimilated to a gateway. Beyond the theological significance of the gateway entirely sealing off the tomb and functioning as the borderline between life and death,[24] the description of how the stone is made to fit tightly the opening of the tomb is remarkable for its detailed precision: it is carved to fit the shape of the doorway (ἀντιτύποιο φέρων μίμημα θυρέτρου), fits on all sides (ἀμφιπαγής), and is equal in measure to the opening of the tomb (ἰσόμετρος).

Here is now Juvencus' version of the same Gospel passage (4.372–379) preceded by the Old Latin source text (11.38–39):

> … erat autem spelunca, et lapis superpositus ei. Dicit Iesus Tollite lapidem. Dicit ei Martha Domine, iam fetet, quadriduum enim habet.

24 On which see Spanoudakis 2014, 135.

And there was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus says, "Take away the stone." Martha says to him, "Lord, by now he smells; it is the fourth day."

... sepulchrum
rupe sub excisa; lapidis quod pondere clausum
ut uidit Sanctus, multo mox uecte moueri
praecipit; at Marthae talis uox uerberat auras:
"Quattuor en luces totidemque ex ordine noctes
praetereunt, quo membra solo conposta quiescunt.
Crediderim, corpus motu fugiente caloris
fetorem miserum liquefactis reddere membris."

... the tomb within a hollowed rock. The Holy One saw it sealed by a massive stone; he ordered it moved with a large crowbar. Martha cried, "Now four successive days and nights have passed since he was laid to rest within the ground. I would think the corpse—its flow of heat now stopped—gives off a grievous stench from its decay."

As frequently noted, the description of Lazarus' tomb in Juvencus is assimilated to the Sibyl's cave in *Aeneid* 6. The Virgilian reminiscence evokes Aeneas' *katabasis* and his return to the world of the living.[25] Poetic coloring takes precedence over descriptive clarity and exegetical meaning vis-à-vis Nonnus' paraphrase of the same passage. Unlike Nonnus' precise description of the stone barring the entrance to the tomb Juvencus mentions vaguely the "massiveness" of the stone,[26] using the ablative *pondere* favored in Latin hexameter poetry. Furthermore, while in the source text Jesus commands the people to "lift away the stone" (ἄρατε τὸν λίθον / *tollite lapidem*) and the command is obeyed (ἦραν οὖν τὸν λίθον / *tulerunt ergo lapidem*),[27] Juvencus is apparently carried away by the implications of *pondere* and has Jesus command that the massive stone "be moved with a crowbar." Nothing of the sort is suggested by the Gospel narra-

25 Several commentators have already noted that *sepulchrum / rupe sub excisa* picks up *Aen.* 6.42 *Excisum Euboicae latus ingens rupis in antrum*; see Deproost 2000, 139. Roberts compares the two caves as follows: "Lazarus' ... *sepulchrum* in its likeness to the Cumaean grotto takes on numinous, but not ominous, connotations. The language perhaps anticipates Lazarus' resurrection. Like Aeneas he too will pass, or apparently pass, from the realm of the dead back to that of the living. In both cases the cave is a liminal location, permitting movement between life and death" (2004, 56).

26 Cf. 4.725 of Jesus' tomb: *Limen concludunt inmensa uolumina petrae*.

27 Respectively Nonnus paraphrases λᾶαν ὑπωροφίοιο μεταστήσασθε μελάθρου and οἱ μὲν λᾶαν ἄειραν.

tive, where Jesus' command is given to more than one person and the stone is actually removed by more than one person. Hence the use of a crowbar is not only unwarranted but adds to Jesus' command a prosaic technical detail, whereas Nonnus employs the meaningful imperative μεταστήσασθε. A few lines below the "crowbar" (*uectis*) re-emerges as "bar, bolt, barrier" (*obex*): the huge stone is depicted as a barricade which is violently opened (384–385 *saxumque inmane reuulis / obicibus patuit*, "the barriers were torn away and the stone opened wide"), in a manner reminiscent of Hercules' violent entry into the cave of Cacus the cattle-thief in *Aeneid* 8.[28] Crowbars and bolts create a perplexing narrative, to say the least, and so does the evocation of a Virgilian episode not yet integrated into Christian theology, as I argued in the introduction to this study.

In John, Jesus' command to remove the stone meets with Martha's warning: "Lord, by now he smells; it is the fourth day." The two interrelated elements of the biblical passage are the number of days that have passed since the burial and the bad odor of the dead body. Nonnus expands the passage to three lines vis-à-vis Juvencus' four, but the former says a lot more than the latter.

In a typical fashion Nonnus' Paraphrase fills in the gaps in Martha's elliptical objection. Here is the essence of what she says: "Leave the stone where it is, because the dead has been four days in the tomb and, if you remove it, an ill-wind will blow the stench from the underground opening." By contrast Juvencus dedicates two lines to each of the two elements (number of days, bad odor), investing the former with Virgilian language[29] and giving dramatic proportions to the stench of the body by adding an explanation for the decay.[30] There is no clarifying amplification as in Nonnus and no Christian edifying message either; just elaboration of the strongly unpleasant effect of decomposition in order to enhance its emotional impact on the readers.

I have argued that Nonnus employs narrative amplification in a systematic way while Juvencus practically avoids it, favoring instead the poetic elaboration of particular points of John's text. The limitations imposed by the shorter length of Juvencus' paraphrase turn out to be less important vis-à-vis his own paraphrastic technique. While Nonnus as a rule pays attention to narrative detail (in a paradoxical way it is he and not Juvencus who renders the source text,

28 Cf. Deproost 2000, 140. Cacus had shut himself into the cave and "fortified the gate-posts by shoring them up with the barricade (of the boulder)," *fultosque emuniit obice postis*, *Aen.* 8.227.

29 Cf. *Aen.* 1.249 of Antenor: *nunc placida compostus pace quiescit* (cited by Huemer 1891, 128).

30 Cf. Deproost 2000, 140 "Marthe répond par une longue phrase qui dilue en un diagnostic clinique la brutalité expressive de l'évangile à propos de la puanteur du cadavre."

in Jerome's words, *paene ad verbum*), Juvencus focuses on what he considers susceptible to poetic elaboration. Mary's hair with which she wiped Jesus' feet after anointing them with myrrh[31] is so important to Nonnus that he brackets the anointing scene (11.4–8) with the repeated phrase Χριστοῦ καλλιέθειρα θεηδόκος ("the fair-tressed woman who welcomed Christ as God").[32] By contrast, Juvencus omits the entire anointing scene. Mary Whitby's concluding remark, in her comprehensive comparison of the Lazarus episode in Nonnus and Juvencus, that "Nonnus is both fuller and truer to the Gospel text" accurately renders a substantial aspect of Nonnus' paraphrastic technique.[33]

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31 John 11.22 ἦν δὲ Μαρία ἡ ἀλείψασα τὸν Κύριον μύρῳ καὶ ἐκμάξασα τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ ταῖς θριξὶν αὐτῆς.

32 On the mystic and spiritual significance of Nonnus' amplification of the anointing scene, see Spanoudakis 2014, ad loc.

33 Whitby 2016, 239.

Green, R.P.H. (2007) "The Evangeliorum Libri of Juvencus. Exegesis by Stealth?" in W. Otten and K. Pollmann (eds), *Poetry and Exegesis in Premodern Latin Christianity: The Encounter between Classical and Christian Strategies of Interpretation* (Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 87). Leiden: 65–80.

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CHAPTER 18

Presentation of Biblical Figures in Poetic Paraphrase: John the Baptist and Pontius Pilate in Nonnus' *Paraphrase of St. John's Gospel*

Laura Franco and Maria Ypsilanti

In the *Paraphrase* Nonnus typically adds terms that denote features and aspects of the feelings, the mental quality, the disposition, or even the appearance of the persons referred to.[1] Nonnus' re-elaboration of the Gospel is largely based on the technique of *amplificatio*, which consists of the expansion of the model by employing different procedures.[2] Among the methods utilized by Nonnus, noticeable is the tendency for offering detailed descriptions of the characters,[3] while the Gospel is generally laconic and economic in its expression. In this chapter we look at Nonnus' presentation of one positive and one negative character of the Gospel: John the Baptist and Pontius Pilate. Their presentation is influenced by the Synoptic Gospels and other literature that involves mainly patristic texts.

1 John the Baptist

Nonnus repeatedly attributes the adjective ἁγνός to John, when there is no such qualification in John's Gospel: *Par.* 1.47, 1.103, 1.133, 5.127 ἁγνός/-όν Ἰωάννης/-ην (in the Gospel simply Ἰωάννης/-ην in 1.15 and 5.33, in 1.29 and 1.36 no reference to him by name). Ἁγνός is an attribute of Artemis and Persephone in the *Odyssey* (5.123, 18.202, 20.71; cf. also Aesch. *Ag.* 134, on Artemis), and describes many other persons and things in poetry, among whom, for example, Zeus (Aesch. *Supp.* 652), Apollo (Aesch. *Supp.* 214), the Muses (Eur. *Med.* 830), Pittheus, The-

1 This chapter is the result of the collaboration for a project on Nonnus' *Paraphrase* started in 2010 and funded by the University of Cyprus in the form of an internal research program. M. Ypsilanti is the author of the first part concerning John the Baptist (pp. 367–372) and L. Franco is the author of the section on Pontius Pilate (pp. 372–376).

2 On the technique of *amplificatio*, see Roberts 1985, esp. 26, 148–154.

3 On the importance of the rhetorical practice of *ethopoiia* in Late Antique poetry, see Agosti 2005. As regards Nonnus, in particular, see 47–50.

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seus' pious grandfather (Eur. *Hipp.* 11), Apollo's temple (Eur. *Andr.* 1065), the (stem of the) olive tree (Call. *H.* 4.323, [Theocr.] 25.23), and a priest of Cybele (Diosc. *AP* 6.220.3). In the *Dionysiaca* the adjective qualifies many deities and objects associated with them, such as Athena, Artemis, and the nymphs. In general, the adjective ἁγνός, related to καθαρός, is equivalent to ἅγιος, as has been observed by critics, and is also etymologically connected to it.[4] Significantly, John the Baptist is the only person to whom this adjective is attributed in the *Paraphrase*, apart from the persons of the Trinity: Christ (13.56), the Father (17.36), and the Spirit (20.98). In fact, the Gospel has the adjective ἅγιος in the corresponding passages of the Johannine text where the Father and the Spirit are mentioned (17.11 πάτερ ἅγιε, 20.22 πνεῦμα ἅγιον), so that Nonnus' use of ἁγνός in these cases is actually a close variation of the diction employed by his model. Thus, the simple equation of ἅγιος with ἁγνός alone does not fully account for the attribution of ἁγνός only to John the Baptist among all other persons appearing in the Gospel and therefore in the *Paraphrase*, too. Some other parameter that links the idea of purity to John should be sought.

Indeed, the epithet ἁγνός is particularly suitable for John the Baptist, since his acts, namely the performance of baptism by means of water, lead to purification par excellence. The image of the clean, pure Baptist recalls patristic accounts of him, such as the statement of Cyril of Alexandria, in his *Commentary on John*, regarding John's pure diet that symbolizes his divine inspiration: τρεφόμενον μὲν ἐλαίῳ τῷ καθαρωτάτῳ, τουτέστι, τῷ διὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος φωτισμῷ (1.523.1f. Pusey). Nonnus re-elaborates the *Vorlage* by clothing his persons and his diction in terminology that continues the thread of the ancient Greek poetic tradition. At the same time, this terminology functions as a means of theological *interpretatio*, i.e., as a contribution to the interpretation of the Gospel. All in all, the Nonnian vocabulary enhances the "transformation" of the Evangelical diction into a new, poetic text, in the light of other texts, usually theological commentaries and treatises, which develop further the various aspects of the notions condensed in it.

John is further characterized as λαοσσόος (*Par.* 1.16), when he first appears in the text.[5] The adjective is an addition of Nonnus in his elaboration of John 1.6,

4 See further De Stefani 2002, 28; Agosti 2003, 493f. (on *Par.* 5.127). For the correlation, on the level of etymology and of meaning, between ἅγιος and ἁγνός, and for a detailed analysis of the latter, in view of its connection to various deities and "holy," "pure" objects, people, places, situations, and rites in ancient Greek, see the discussion of Williger 1922, 37–72. For the relation between ἁγνός/ἁγνίζειν and καθαρός/καθαίρειν, see especially 46–48, 57, 65. For ἁγνός in its Christian context (also with references to the Old Testament), see Williger 1922, 63.

5 For the formation and history of the word, see De Stefani 2002, 120 (on *Par.* 1.16); see also Appel 1984.

where John the Baptist is presented as "sent by God," but his name is not accompanied by any other term in the Gospel. Λαοσσόος is a Homeric adjective that qualifies gods (Athena, Ares, Eris, Apollo) and also a mortal, who had, however, a divine characteristic, since he was a seer (Amphiaraus). Eustathius of Thessalonica explains the adjective when applied to the Homeric gods of war, as meaning (for instance, in the case of Athena) λαὸν σεύουσα εἰς πόλεμον ("urging the army to the battle"). In the same Homeric spirit, Nonnus in the *Dionysiaca* employs it almost always for gods (Athena, Ares, Dionysus) and also for the voice of Dionysus as he urges on his maenads (Βασσαρίδες 27.166, 43.69) to rush to the battlefield. However, ancient scholiasts, Eustathius in his commentary on Homer (e.g., *Comm. Il.* 4.71,3 ff.), and lexica such as Hesychius and the *Etymologicum Magnum* recognize also the sense "saving the people" for λαοσσόος, especially for Apollo and Athena. The *Etymologicum Magnum* (s.v. λαοσσόος) gives this meaning also to the adjective when it describes the seer Amphiaraus, since this person saves people with his prophecies, like his protector god, Apollo. Now, in the *Paraphrase*, apart from John the Baptist, the adjective is also attributed to Christ (7.117, 11.217) and to Christ's voice (8.1), in instances where the Gospel does not use any adjective whatsoever. Commentators hold that in all instances of the *Paraphrase* the adjective means "saving the people" and that it "implies salvation through initiation in the faith of Christ."[6] However, the other sense of the adjective, that is, "urging people" cannot be excluded, even as an implicit second meaning, along with "salvatory," which is, of course, easier to understand in a Christian context. If this assumption is correct, especially in the case of John the Baptist, we would have an instance of the typically Alexandrian technique of *double entendre*. The sense "urging people" for λαοσσόος, as regards John the Baptist, can be supported by the account of the other Gospels according to which John's acts, whether teaching or baptizing, affected masses of people. These are described as λαός in Luke: ἐν τῷ βαπτισθῆναι ἅπαντα τὸν λαόν (Luke 3.21), εὐηγγελίζετο τὸν λαόν (Luke 3.18). In other Evangelic instances, too, the massive number of John's followers is emphasized. In Matthew, people are described as ὄχλος, a noun that stresses even more strikingly the huge number of John's followers.[7] Furthermore, John Chrysostom and Cyril, for instance, also refer to John's preaching as being addressed to the masses, ὄχλοι.[8] Thus, in the *Paraphrase* Nonnus transfers to the Christian God and to this God's prophet a

6 As Spanoudakis 2014, 343 (on *Par.* 11.217) puts it. See also Appel 1984, 3–4.

7 Cf. Mat. 3.5 ἐξεπορεύετο πρὸς αὐτὸν Ἱεροσόλυμα καὶ πᾶσα ἡ Ἰουδαία καὶ πᾶσα ἡ περίχωρος τοῦ Ἰορδάνου (cf. also Mark 1.5), Matt. 21.26 φοβού μεθα τὸν ὄχλον, πάντες γὰρ ὡς προφήτην ἔχουσιν τὸν Ἰωάννην.

8 John Chrys. *In Jo. PG* 59.110.59–60 ὕστερον δὲ ἅτε σαφέστερον μαθών, τοῖς ὄχλοις αὐτὸν (sc. Christ)

qualification typically employed for the Homeric gods and their "prophet," the seer Amphiaraus. In this transfer, the double meaning of λαοσσόος is present and appropriate, as we suggest, certainly for John the Baptist, and, perhaps, for the preaching of Christ as well. The calling of the new religion and this religion's agents both inspires drive and enthusiasm in their followers and also results in their protection and redemption.

In *Par.* 1.60 John is described as ἐτυμόθροος κῆρυξ, which is a Nonnian addition to the text. The noun κῆρυξ, also attributed to John elsewhere in the *Paraphrase* (1.15, κῆρυξ ἀρχεγόνου βαπτίσματος, and 1.18, ἑνὸς κήρυκος ἰωῇ, also Nonnian additions), reflects John's action of κηρύσσειν as we have it in the Synoptics.[9] 'Ετυμόθροος is a Nonnian coinage and reflects the truthfulness of the words of the Baptist, as regards Christ, as is stated, for instance, in John 10.41 πάντα δὲ ὅσα εἶπεν Ἰωάννης περὶ τούτου ἀληθῆ ἦν[10] and in John 5.33 μεμαρτύρηκεν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ. As a whole, the phrase ἐτυμόθροος κῆρυξ perhaps owes something to the Aeschylean verse from a choral song of *Sept.* 82, σαφὴς ἔτυμος ἄγγελος, where the expression is used in a metaphorical sense. So, the "truthfully speaking herald" can be seen as again based on a combination of a phrase found in ancient poetry with a pattern of Evangelic diction. Furthermore, the adjective ἐτυμόθροος is one example of Nonnus' technique of refreshing the Greek language through the creation of new compounds that combine elements of existing compounds with other words of his own choice. To compounds containing θρόος found in earlier poets (ἀλλόθροος, found in the *Odyssey* and some other authors: Herodotus, Aeschylus, Triphiodorus; μειξόθροος and οἰωνόθροος, ποικιλόθροος, δύσθροος, ἡδύθροος, etc.), Nonnus adds a whole new group of adjectives from new combinations of θρόος, such as ὁμόθροος, ἑτερόθροος, λιπόθροος, χαλκόθροος, etc., mainly in the *Dionysiaca*, but also in the *Paraphrase*. In the context of this technique, it is notable that, apart from ὁμόθροος and διδυμόθροος which necessarily indicate the numerical quantity of the agents whose voice these epithets describe, almost always the other compounds created from θρόος in the *Paraphrase* describe the words of Christ (αὐτόθροος, 5.124, and πρωτόθροος, 13.88), Moses (πρωτόθροος, 5.175), and Isaiah (πρωτόθροος, 12.152). Nonnus' use of αὐτόθροος for Christ is not very significant for the present discussion, because the Nonnian phrase αὐτόθροον μαρτυρίην renders the Gospel's

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ἐκήρυττε, κτλ. Cyril 1.147.8–9 Pusey ἐθαυμάζετο παρὰ πάντων ὁ βαπτιστής, πολλοὺς ἐποίει τοὺς μαθητάς, ὄχλος αὐτὸν περιέθει τῶν βαπτιζομένων πολύς.

9 Cf. Mark 1.4 ἐγένετο Ἰωάννης βαπτίζων ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ καὶ κηρύσσων βάπτισμα μετανοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν, Matt. 3.1 ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις παραγίνεται Ἰωάννης ὁ βαπτιστὴς κηρύσσων ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ τῆς Ἰουδαίας. See also Golega 1930, 133; De Stefani 2002, on *Par.* 1.15.

10 Rendered similarly by Nonnus as ἐτήτυμα there (*Par.* 10.147).

μαρτυρῶ περὶ ἐμαυτοῦ (5.31), which means that the poet follows his model very closely when rephrasing it, simply repeating its idea. Πρωτόθροος, however, is, as usual, a Nonnian addition, and indicates the authenticity and essentiality of the words of both Christ and the Baptist. For figures of the Old Testament (Moses and the prophet Isaiah) and for the Baptist, Nonnus emphasizes the idea of a voice which speaks *first*, before others. John, who is both πρωτόθροος and ἐτυμόθροος, is seen in the light of figures whose speech is emblematically important. In his case, to the emphasis on the originality of voice an emphasis on the authority of preaching is further added.

John is further described as having a voice that is πανθελγής (*Par.* 1.114 μαρτυρίην ἀγόρευεν ἑῇ πανθελγέι φωνῇ, rendering the simple Johannine ἐμαρτύρησεν, 1.32). The adjective is probably also a Nonnian coinage, attributed also to Christ's voice (7.142) and to the truth, ἐτητυμίη (18.177, in the dialogue with Pilate).[11] Nonnus uses the adjective in the *Dionysiaca* to describe objects that belong to deities and to the sphere of these deities' special powers, such as the girdle of Apate (8.156) and of Aphrodite (31.273), the wand of Hermes (35.235), the arrow of Eros (42.195), and the box of Eros (48.273). Vian notes on *Dion.* 31.273 that the adjective "takes a cosmic significance," since it denotes the divinities' ability to exercise a general, omnipotent charm. Once more the poet uses the same term to describe both the pagan gods and the Christian God, in this case presenting the arresting strength of pagan deities and the power of God's message in the new Christian context in parallel terms. More specifically, as regards the voice of John the Baptist, πανθελγής conveys also the implication of influence of the masses, exactly like the adjective λαοσσόος discussed above. Commenting on the famous φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, which describes John the Baptist (Sept. *Is.* 40.3, echoed in Matt. 3.3, Mark 1.3, Luke 3.4, John 1.23), Epiphanius elaborates on the concept of John's voice, explaining how it made the masses pay attention to what he preached and thus prepared them for Λόγος, who came after himself.[12] Nonnus' πανθελγής can be seen also as a comparable comment on the same notion.

To sum up: as happens typically in Nonnus, the depiction of John the Baptist does remain faithful to the *Vorlage*, but also incorporates features from the

11 On the formation of the word, see further Livrea 1989, on *Par.* 18.177.

12 *Panarion* 3.189.5–12 Holl καὶ διὰ τοῦτο «ἐγὼ φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ», ἑτοιμαστικὴ φωνὴ τῆς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀκοῆς. πρῶτον γὰρ ἀδιάρθρωτον εἰώθασιν οἱ φωνοῦντες ἀποδιδόναι φωνὴν ἠχήεσσαν, ἀπὸ μήκοθεν καλοῦντες τούς τι ἔχοντας παρ' αὐτῶν ἀκούειν, καὶ ἐπὰν ἐκεῖνοι τῆς φωνῆς ἀκούσωσι μόνης καὶ δώσωσι τὸν νοῦν τοῦ ἀκούειν καὶ ἑτοιμάσωσι τὴν ἀκοήν, τότε ὁ τὴν ἠχήεσσαν φωνὴν ἀποδοὺς λοιπὸν διαστέλλει τὸν λόγον, ὅνπερ ἠβουλήθη εἰπεῖν. οὕτω καὶ Ἰωάννης φωνὴ ἐγένετο ἑτοιμάζουσα τὴν ἀκοὴν τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

Synoptic Gospels and echoes ideas found in patristic literature. Nonnus' phrasing is elaborated with vocabulary drawn from pagan poetry and is given a fresh meaning, suitable to the new, Christian context.

2 Pontius Pilate

Pontius Pilate is mentioned by Philo of Alexandria and by Flavius Josephus.[13] They both describe the governor of Judea in negative terms: he was a harsh man, insensitive toward the Jewish subjects of the Roman Empire,[14] albeit not quick to resort to unnecessary violence.[15] Josephus in his *Antiquities of the Jews* points out in regard to Jesus' trial that, even though Pilate condemned him to death, Christ's followers did not give up their affection for him.[16]

In addition to references to him in Jewish writers, Pilate appears in all four Gospels, which present him in various ways. In Matthew he is less cunning and manipulative than in Mark and John, and certainly more indifferent.[17] In Mark he is depicted as a harsh and shrewd politician who eventually asks the crowd to make a decision about the fate of the prisoner in order to avoid a difficult situation, although this does not free him from blame.[18] The description of Luke is probably the least flattering to Pilate, who is here presented as cowardly and indecisive. In John's Gospel, Pilate is described as an arrogant despot, who is ironical toward both the Jews and Jesus throughout the trial.[19] Only twice does Pilate moderate his arrogance: when he asks himself "what is truth?"[20] and later, when, as soon as he realizes that the religious charges against Christ are potentially much more dangerous than the political ones, he reacts with fear.[21]

Apart from the passages referred to above, there is also a tradition much more favorable to Pilate. He is considered a Christian by Tertullian (*Apol.*

13 For the figure of Pontius Pilate, see recently Schiavone 2016. This is part of a wider discussion that will appear in M. Ypsilanti, L. Franco (with the collaboration of F. Doroszewski and C. Greco), *Nonnus' Paraphrase between Poetry, Rhetoric and Theology: Rewriting the Fourth Gospel in the Fifth Century* (Leiden 2020).

14 See Bond 1998, especially 24–48 on Philo and 49–109 on Josephus.

15 Bond 1998, 60.

16 *AJ* 18.63–64 γίνεται δὲ κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον Ἰησοῦς σοφὸς ἀνήρ … καὶ αὐτὸν ἐνδείξει τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν παρ' ἡμῖν σταυρῷ ἐπιτετιμηκότος Πιλάτου οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο οἱ τὸ πρῶτον ἀγαπήσαντες.

17 See Bond 1998, 136.

18 See Bond 1998, 104.

19 On the interpretation of Pilate's behavior throughout the trial, see Bond 1998, 174–172.

20 John 18.38 λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Πιλᾶτος, Τί ἐστιν ἀλήθεια;

21 John 19.8 ὅτε οὖν ἤκουσεν ὁ Πιλᾶτος τοῦτον τὸν λόγον, μᾶλλον ἐφοβήθη.

21.24).[22] Also, the Christian historian Eusebius, in his *History of the Church* (2.7)[23] states that the governor committed suicide after the execution of Jesus. Furthermore, an overall positive picture of the Roman governor emerges from the tradition of the apocryphal Gospels. He is still revered as a saint in the Ethiopian church together with his wife, Procula or Procla, and he is considered a martyr in the Coptic Church.

Despite the fact that Nonnus follows the Johannine account, his portrayal of Pilate is much more positive than that of John or of the Synoptics. He is described as "wise" three times (19.38 *καὶ σοφὸς ὡς κλύε τοῦτο δικασπόλος ἔτρεμεν ἀνήρ*, in 19.30 *καὶ Πιλάτος λαοῖσιν ἐχέφρονα ῥήξατο φωνήν* and in 19.103 *ἦν δὲ σοφῷ καλάμῳ τετυπωμένον*). The motif of an *ἐχέφρων δικασπόλος* occurs once in a verse of Gregory of Nazianzus (ἐν δὲ δίκης θώκοισι, δικασπόλος ὥς τις ἐχέφρων)[24] which Nonnus perhaps knew. The motif also reflects the idea of a righteous judge, expressed by Cyril (3.66.23 Pusey) Πιλάτου τε πρὸς ταῦτα καθηκόντως τε καὶ ἀδεκάστως καὶ οὔπω πρὸς χάριν δικάζοντος.

Another key adjective, employed by Nonnus in order to acquit Pilate, is ἑκών/ἀέκων, stressing the governor's unwillingness to put Jesus to death (19.83 Χριστὸν *ἑκὼν ἀέκων ἀδίκῳ* παρέδωκεν ὀλέθρῳ, where an alliterative structure is built over the sound κ). This probable unwillingness is a Nonnian addition, absent in the *Vorlage*,[25] which the poet has most probably drawn from Cyril's comment, where the adjective is also used,[26] but the *iunctura* ἑκὼν ἀέκων also represents an echo of the Homeric phrase ἑκὼν ἀέκων (καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ σοὶ δῶκα ἑκὼν ἀέκοντί γε θυμῷ, *Il.* 4.43), which became proverbial, as Eustathius notes.[27] In the Iliadic passage, Zeus tells Hera that although he "willingly" allowed her to help

22 Tert. *Apol.* 21.24 *ea omnia super Christo Pilatus, et ipse iam pro sua conscientia Christianus, Caesari tunc Tiberio nuntiavit.*

23 Even though Eusebius suggests that Pilate's suicide is to be ascribed to the action of divine justice: οὐκ ἀγνοεῖν δὲ ἄξιον ὡς καὶ αὐτὸν ἐκεῖνον τὸν ἐπὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος Πιλᾶτον κατὰ Γάϊον, οὗ τοὺς χρόνους διεξιμεν, τοσαύταις περιπεσεῖν κατέχει λόγος συμφοραῖς, ὡς ἐξ ἀνάγκης αὐτοφονευτὴν ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τιμωρὸν αὐτόχειρα γενέσθαι, τῆς θείας, ὡς ἔοικεν, δίκης οὐκ εἰς μακρὸν αὐτὸν μετελθούσης.

24 *Carm. PG* 37.627–628.

25 The line corresponds to John 19.16, which simply states that Pilate handed over Jesus: τότε οὖν παρέδωκεν αὐτὸν αὐτοῖς ἵνα σταυρωθῇ. Παρέλαβον οὖν τὸν Ἰησοῦν.

26 Cyril *Jo.* 3.79 Pusey Ταῖς τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἀκράτοις ὀργαῖς ἀπονέμει λοιπὸν καὶ *οὐχ ἑκὼν ὁ Πιλάτος* τὴν εἰς πᾶν ὁτιοῦν καὶ τῶν ἔξω νόμων ἀποδρομήν, καὶ τὴν τοῖς δικάζουσι πρέπουσαν ἐξουσίαν ἀφελών, ἀταμιεύτοις ἤδη φέρεσθαι τοῖς θυμοῖς ἀνεγκλήτως ἐφίησι, σταυροῦν ἐπιτρέψας τὸν ἐπ᾽ οὐδενὶ μὲν τῶν φαύλων ἁλόντα παντελῶς, ὅτι δὲ μόνον Υἱὸν ἑαυτὸν ἔφη Θεοῦ παραλόγως κρινόμενον.

27 *In Il.* Vol. 1.699.34 Τὸ δέ «ἑκὼν ἀέκοντί γε θυμῷ» ἔπεσε μὲν εἰς κοινὴν παροιμίαν τήν «ἑκὼν ἀέκων τόδε τι πεποίηκα».

the Greeks against the Trojans, deep within himself, his θυμός was "unwilling," a statement that also describes Pilate's attitude. Just as Zeus was "forced" to comply with his wife's wishes, Pilate eventually yields to the pressure of the Jewish crowd.

In Cyril's commentary we find other passages where it is implied that Pilate is not completely to blame. For instance, it is asserted that Pilate felt deep sorrow (λίαν λυπεῖται) over Jesus' fate.[28] Similar statements occur in John Chrysostom and Basil, where Pilate's efforts to save Christ are clearly underlined. In the *Homilies on John* by John Chrysostom it is stated that Pilate decided to flog Christ in order to help Him, in the hope that this punishment would soothe the fury of the Jews (*Homily* 85).[29] This concept is stressed again in the same homily where it is suggested that Pilate was trying to protect Jesus from the accusations put forward by the Jews.[30] An assertion concerning this "milder" fault of Pilate is also found in Basil of Caesarea's *Quaestiones*,[31] where, even though it is clearly pointed out that the Roman governor was guilty, his fault is considered less serious.

One of the distinctive features of the Nonnian Pilate is the swiftness characterizing his actions and thinking, which suggests a zealous attitude, a sharp mind and some inner lack of tranquility. He is described as ταχύμητις in 19.16, but adjectives of the kind occur also elsewhere: the governor is described as ταχυεργός in 18.140 (καὶ Πιλάτος ταχυεργὸς ἑῆς ἐξήλασεν αὐλῆς), which may be translated as "zealous," but with an emphasis on the aspect of swiftness, in 18.149, where the adverb ὀξύ is employed in a positive manner to characterize his way of thinking, since he immediately understands that the Jews are accusing Christ because they are animated by hatred (18.149 ὁ δὲ φθόνον ὀξὺ νοήσας), and in 18.181, when, after having asked the famous question "what is truth," he swiftly (ὀξύς) leaves his throne (ἀτρεκίη τί πέλει; καὶ ἑὸν θρόνον ὀξὺς ἐάσας). As

28 3.76.24 Pusey ἐφ' ᾧ δὴ καὶ λίαν λυπεῖται Πιλάτος, εἰ καὶ τὸν οὕτω λαμπρὰν ἐσχηκότα παρ' αὐτοῖς τὴν ὑπόληψιν, ὡς Υἱόν τε Θεοῦ καὶ βασιλέα νομίζεσθαι, οὐ τεθνάναι δεῖν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὠμῶς ἀποθνήσκειν ἐντόνως οὕτω φασί· σταυροῦ γὰρ τὸ χεῖρον οὐδέν.

29 *PG* 59.455.56 ff. *Ἐμάστιξεν αὐτὸν ὁ Πιλᾶτος,* τάχα ἐκλῦσαι βουλόμενος καὶ παραμυθήσασθαι τὸν Ἰουδαϊκὸν ζῆλον. Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ τοῖς προτέροις οὐκ ἴσχυσεν αὐτὸν ἐξελέσθαι, σπεύδων μέχρι τούτου τὸ δεινὸν στῆσαι, καὶ ἐμάστιξε, καὶ γενέσθαι τὰ γενόμενα συνεχώρησε … τὴν χλαμύδα καὶ τὸν στέφανον περιτεθῆναι, ὥστε αὐτῶν χαλάσαι τὴν ὀργήν. Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἐστεφανωμένον ἐξήγαγε πρὸς αὐτούς, ἵνα τὴν ὕβριν τὴν εἰς αὐτὸν γεγενημένην ἰδόντες, μικρὸν ἀναπνεύσωσι τοῦ πάθους καὶ ἐμέσωσι τὸν ἰόν.

30 *PG* 59.456.19–20 Ὅρα διὰ πόσων ὁ δικαστὴς ἀπολογεῖται, συνεχῶς αὐτὸν ἀπαλλάττων ἐγκλημάτων· ἀλλὰ τοὺς κύνας οὐδὲν τούτων ἐνέτρεψε.

31 *Reg. br. PG* 31.1112 Τοῦτο τὸ κρῖμα φανερὸν ἐκ τῶν τοῦ Κυρίου πρὸς Πιλᾶτον ῥημάτων, εἰπόντος· *Ὁ παραδιδούς με σοὶ μείζονα ἁμαρτίαν ἔχει*. Σαφὲς γὰρ ἐκ τούτου, ὅτι καὶ ὁ Πιλᾶτος, ἀνεχόμενος τῶν παραδεδωκότων, ἁμαρτίαν εἶχεν, εἰ καὶ ἐλάττονα.

Livrea noted,[32] although the adjective is meant to underline his zealous attitude toward his juridical functions, it also suggests his profound disquiet.

The sympathetic attitude of the paraphraser toward the Roman procurator is particularly evident in another passage of the same book: 19.39–40 *καὶ σοφὸς ὡς κλύε τοῦτο δικασπόλος ἔτρεμεν ἀνήρ / σπερχομένοις δὲ πόδεσσιν ἐδύσατο πανδόκον αὐλήν*, rendering in an impressive image the Johannine statement that Pilate panicked.[33] The righteousness of this judge is underlined by a term that already appears in the Homeric poems to indicate the judge (both as a noun and as an adjective).[34] In the *Dionysiaca*, δικασπόλος is often associated with figures of authority, judges, or deities. It is used twice with regard to the role of Cecrops[35] in the mythical competition between Poseidon and Athena for the supremacy on Athens, once with regard to Zeus, who acts as a judge in the contest between Dionysus' wine and Aristaeus' honey,[36] once with regard to Athena as the goddess of justice[37] and once with regard to Hermes, who administers justice.[38]

In the generally positive characterization of the Nonnian Pilate, a few somewhat ambiguous (if not negative) features can be detected elsewhere, too. The most striking case is the phrasing of 19.45 *καὶ Πιλάτος βαρύμηνιν ἀπερροίβδησεν ἰωήν*, rephrasing the plain and neutral evangelic λέγει (John 19.10). Here, he reacts to Christ's silence during the questioning, with deep rage. The choleric aspect of the governor's personality is illustrated by the use of the synecdoche βαρύμηνιν ἰωήν, which is in turn strengthened by the presence of the verb ἀπορροιβδέω "to shriek forth."[39] In the *Dionysiaca* the adjective βαρύμηνις,[40] possibly echoing Aesch. *Ag.* 1481–1482 (μέγαν … / δαίμονα καὶ βαρύμηνιν αἰνεῖς), is often—although not exclusively—employed to depict the wrath of Dionysus'

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32 Livrea 1989, 200.

33 John 19.8 Ὅτε οὖν ἤκουσεν ὁ Πιλᾶτος τοῦτον τὸν λόγον, μᾶλλον ἐφοβήθη.

34 E.g., *Il.* 1.238, *Od.* 11.186.

35 *Dion.* 36.126 and 43.126.

36 *Dion.* 19.234 καὶ Κρονίδης ἐκάθητο δικασπόλος, ἀθλοφόροις δὲ.

37 *Dion.* 41.275.

38 *Dion.* 41.171.

39 The verb is very rarely employed in Greek literature, although it occurs thirteen times in the Nonnian corpus: in the *Dion.* it is always related to the voice and it indicates pain, menace, reproach, or fury, which is consistent with Pilate's wrath. Apart from Nonnus, it is employed by Sophocles (*Ant.* 1021–1022) οὐδ᾽ ὄρνις εὐσήμους ἀπορροιβδεῖ βοάς, / ἀνδροφθόρου βεβρῶτες αἵματος λίπος (nor does any bird sound out clear signs in its shrill cries, for they have tasted the fatness of a slain man's blood [trans. Jebb]), and by Origenes (*Cels.* 8.71.17) ἀλλ᾽ ἔοικε φλυαρίας ἐν τούτοις ἑξῆς συνάπτων καὶ τοῦτ᾽ ἀφ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ ἀπερροιβδηκέναι (but in his words he seems to be putting together nonsensical statements and to have shrieked out stuff he invented out of his own mind [trans. Chadwick]).

40 Eighteen occurrences in the *Dionysiaca* and two in the *Paraphrase*.

opponents (e.g., Deriades 36.135; Pentheus 44.94; Hera 8.109; 9.69; 6.171 and 202, 30.200, etc.) and it occurs only twice in the *Paraphrase*, the other instance being 7.88 πάντες ἐμοὶ βαρύμηνιν ἐγείρετε κόμπον ἀπειλῆς, where it describes the hostility of the crowds toward Jesus.

To sum up: Nonnus' characterization of Pilate, even though overall positive, presents a number of somewhat ambiguous features that suit the character of this controversial figure. This ambiguity owes much to sources later than the Gospels, namely patristic texts, in which the motivation of Pilate is elaborated and seen in a more positive light.

3 Conclusion

In the two test cases examined in the present chapter, one of a positive figure (John the Baptist) and one of a not entirely negative character (Pontius Pilate), it is clear that Nonnus accommodates in his poetry phrases that are meaningful in terms of the Christian doctrine or that are psychologically interesting. In doing so, he enhances the rhetorical *amplificatio* of his model, as regards the form of his work. As for its content, the poet enriches this in accord with "readings" of the Johannine characters that can be found in the other Gospels and in later authors. He constantly places epic vocabulary, which he also exploits in the *Dionysiaca*, in a Christian framework and makes it work in the new context equally well. To summarize a few of the instances discussed above, John the Baptist is, inter alia, "pure" as is appropriate for a(n early) Christian figure who offers cleansing through baptism, but also like pagan deities and priests; he is also "saving"/"urging" people, according to descriptions of his action in Christian literature, but also like ancient gods and like John's pagan equivalent, the seer Amphiaraus. Pilate, again, is described in terms of a "wise judge," recalling a number of pagan deities including Zeus; like Zeus he is also both "willing and not willing" to take sides, but he finally conforms, too, to the wishes of the demanding party. Pilate, however, is also enraged against Christ as Dionysus' very enemies are enraged against him; Nonnian Pilate combines in his character conflicting features and it is this mixture that demonstrates the skillfulness with which his portrait is constructed by the poet. Nonnus uses creatively the pagan cultural heritage, making it contribute to the construction of complex psychological portraits, as happens characteristically in the presentation of Pontius Pilate, or placing it in the service of the interpretation of the Johannine text according to the Christian tradition.

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PART 4

Nonnus and Late Antique Culture

CHAPTER 19

Sacrificing a Serpent: Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* 2.671–679 and the Orphic *Lithica* 736–744

Ewa Osek

> Who has ever sacrificed snakes or scorpions or monkeys or any other such creature?
>
> THEOPHRASTUS, *De Pietate*

1 Introduction

In Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* and the *Orphic Lithica*, there are two parallel scenes illustrating the expiatory rites that must be performed after sacrificing serpents. These scenes are parts of snake episodes that play a crucial part in both poems.

In the *Dionysiaca*, Dionysus' grandfather Cadmus goes from Phoenicia to Boeotia, where he is provoked to kill the serpentine monster guarding the Dirce spring. He butchers this dragon instead of the sacrificial heifer indicated by the Delphic oracle (*Dion.* 4.351–354). We do not hear about the heifer again, so it is hard to say whether the cow was sacrificed after the dragon was slain or whether the dragon's slaughter replaced the regular animal sacrifice. But we do hear, again and again, about the consequences of killing the dragon, which determined the rest of Cadmus' life (*Dion.* 4.416–420, 44.107–118, 46.364–367). Many years later, this Phoenician was forced to leave the Boeotian Thebes, which he founded, and move to the Illyrian country, where he was changed into a snake. Even advice given to Cadmus by Zeus in anticipation of what would happen did not help the hero to avoid his destiny (*Dion.* 2.671–679).

The snake sacrifice in the *Lithica* (*Lapidary*)—a Late Antique poem attributed to Orpheus[1]—is shown as intended by Helenus, a Trojan expert in divination. The anonymous author of the *Orphic Lithica*, whoever he was, displayed

1 For dating the *Orphic Lithica* see Halleux and Schamp 1985, 51–57. The dating preferred by Halleux and Schamp, the first half of the second century AD, is not very acceptable. A much

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an ambiguous attitude toward animal sacrifice. On the one hand, he approbates blood sacrifices: e.g. the annual sacrifice of calves in honor of Helios (*Orph. L.* 151–157), thigh-bones burned with fire (*Orph. L.* 185–186), and describes how Helenus killed a huge serpent next to the altar, cooked it, and ate its meat (*Orph. L.* 701–735). On the other hand, the author represents the same Helenus as temporarily abstaining from animal food (*Orph. L.* 368) and declaring that no living thing should ever be sacrificed upon the bloodless altar (*Orph. L.* 699–700).

Serpent sacrifice was far from a regular sacrificial practice in the classical and Hellenistic periods; it was, in fact, unheard of in the Greek world. As Theophrastus states, no one ever sacrificed snakes, scorpions, or the like (Thphr. *Piet.* fr. 12 Pötscher). Consequently, both poems describe this bizarre sacrifice as requiring a special expiatory rite that must be performed by the serpent slayers. The cathartic rites performed are described in detail by Nonnus (*Dion.* 2.671–679), as well as by Pseudo-Orpheus (*Orph. L.* 736–744). These two accounts will be the subject of my analysis.

2 The Cadmus Story in Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*

2.1 *Before Killing the Dragon*

Let us start with a passage containing Zeus' prophecy (*Dion.* 2.663–698). The prophecy is given to Cadmus, Zeus' companion in his battle against the Giants, and is spoken out of a dark cloud, νέφος ὄρφνης (*Dion.* 2.662). Zeus warns his ally: if he, Cadmus, kills the dragon of Dirce, one of Ares' progeny, the god of war will take revenge on him. Zeus then gives Cadmus a piece of advice: to avert Ares' wrath and his own demise, Cadmus should perform the following rite at night (*Dion.* 2.671–679):

Ἄρεα μὲν Διρκαῖον ἀεὶ πεφύλαξο χαλέψαι,
Ἄρεα νόσφι λόχου κεχολωμένον· ἐννύχιος δὲ
οὐρανίοιο Δράκοντος ἐναντίον ὄμμα τιτήνας,
ῥέξον ὑπὲρ βωμοῖο λαβὼν εὔοδμον ὀφίτην,
κικλήσκων Ὀφιοῦχον Ὀλύμπιον, ἐν πυρὶ καίων
Ἰλλυρικῆς ἐλάφοιο πολυγλώχινα κεραίην,
ὄφρα φύγῃς, ὅσα πικρὰ τεῷ πεπρωμένα πότμῳ

more probable date of the poem would be the same as the conjectural date of the *Dionysiaca*, c. AD 451.

Μοιριδίης ἔκλωσεν ἕλιξ ἄτρακτος ἀνάγκης,
εἰ λίνα Μοιράων ἐπιπείθεται.[2]

Be careful always not to offend Ares Dircaian, Ares angry when deprived of his brood. At dead of night fix your gaze on the heavenly Serpent, and do sacrifice on the altar holding in your hand a piece of fragrant serpentine; and calling upon the Olympian Serpent-holder, burn in the fire a horn of the Illyrian deer with many tines: that so you may escape all the bitter things which the wreathed spindle of apportioned Necessity has spun for your fate—if the threads of the Portioners ever obey!

The quoted instructions are clear and precise: hold a piece of serpentine stone in your hand while gazing at the heavenly Serpent and burn a horn of Illyrian deer upon an altar with prayers to the celestial Serpent-holder.

The Late Antique compendia give us insight into the objects mentioned. The Serpent-holder, Ophiuchus, is a constellation described by ancient astrologers Aratus (*Phaen.* 74–87) and Manilius (*Astr.* 331–333); it is referred to three times by Nonnus (*Dion.* 1.199–202, 1.244–246, 25.144–145). The constellation was called Ὀφιοῦχος, or the Serpent-holder, because it resembles an old athletic man wrestling with an enormous serpent—i.e., the constellation of the Serpent (Ὄφις)—to prevent it from reaching the constellation of the Crown (Στέφανος). At the same time, the Serpent-holder is trampling upon the constellation of Scorpio (Σκορπίος).[3]

As concerns the two stones mentioned above, the former is ὀφίτης, or the serpentine stone, well known to Dioscorides (*Mat. Med.* 5.143), Pliny the Elder (*NH* 36.56), and Pseudo-Orpheus (*Orph. L.* 473–474), who claim that the smell of the serpentine stone, either burned with fire or worn as an amulet, is an antidote to snakebites and a remedy for headaches. The latter object, a horn of Illyrian deer, is the same as ἐλαφοκερατίτης ("stag horn"), to use the technical term, otherwise known as "Thracian stone." I suppose that both terms refer to bezoars, organic stones found in the intestines of herbivorous animals, especially deer. The ancient authorities, namely Nicander (*Ther.* 35–36), Pliny the Elder (*NH* 8.118), Aelianus (*NA* 9.20), and Pseudo-Orpheus (*Orph. L.* 244–259), inform us that the smell of burned "stag horn" expels serpents, since deer are the greatest enemies of snakes.

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2 The edition of the *Dionysiaca* used is that of Vian 1976–2006. All translations of the *Dionysiaca* are from Rouse 1940–1942.

3 Stegemann 1930, 75–76.

Zeus, as an omniscient god, anticipated the slaughter of the dragon at the Dirce spring and the fatal consequences that this brave deed would have. The advice the god gave his pupil describes the expiatory rite that Cadmus needed to perform after he killed the dragon. The rite involves the magical use of two stones against snakes, serpentine and bezoar, which correspond to the constellations of the Serpent and the Serpent-holder.

2.2 *The Dragon's Slaughter*

Zeus was right. After Cadmus landed in Greece, he consulted the Delphic oracle and then followed the cow that the oracle indicated. The oracular heifer, after leading him to Boeotia, lay down near the Dirce spring which was guarded by a dreadful dragon, Ares' own child (*Dion.* 4.285–355).

The horrible monster, which Nonnus calls both serpent (ὄφις) and dragon (δράκων) (*Dion.* 4.358, 366), killed several of Cadmus' companions with the green poison in its teeth, and then attacked the future founder of Thebes. As the dragon coiled around his body, the hero managed to kill it with a stone he held in his hand (*Dion.* 4.356–415). Daniel Ogden compared the image of the Dircean dragon as depicted in Greek literature and art with the one described by Nonnus. He found that

> Nonnus' δράκων has a shaggy crest and a spangled back (αἰολόνωτος). It kills several of Cadmus' men by biting them on the chest, in the liver, in the eye, and on the foot. Its green, frothing venom shoots to its victim's brain, which instantly melts and pours out down his nostrils. It attempts to bring Cadmus down by coiling around his legs.[4]

Cadmus had no idea whom he had really killed. The monster in question, being Ares' son, must have been the half-brother of Harmonia (Ares' daughter and Cadmus' wife).[5] What follows from the mythological genealogy is that Cadmus killed his future brother-in-law. Nonnus, however, is silent about the embarrassing problem of the family relationship between the dragon and the dragon slayer.

2.3 *After Killing the Dragon*

We are not told if Cadmus actually performed the nocturnal ritual as Zeus had recommended. Regardless, some select passages from books 4, 5, 44, and 46 of

4 Ogden 2013, 51.
5 Ogden 2013, 51 and n. 153.

the *Dionysiaca* anticipate the future fate of Cadmus and throw some light onto what was to happen many years after he killed the monster.

After Cadmus killed the dragon, its father, Ares, put a curse on the killer. Due to Ares' wrath, Cadmus was destined to emigrate from Thebes (which he founded next to the place where he killed the dragon) to the Illyrian country, and there be changed into a serpent (*Dion.* 4.416–420):

> καὶ δαπέδῳ τετάνυστο δράκων νέκυς, ἀμφὶ δὲ νεκρῷ
> θοῦρος Ἄρης βαρύμηνις ἀνέκραγε· χωομένου δὲ
> Κάδμος ἀμειβομένων μελέων ἑλικώδεϊ μορφῇ
> ἀλλοφυὴς ἤμελλε παρ᾽ Ἰλλυρίδος σφυρὰ γαίης
> ξεῖνον ἔχειν ἴνδαλμα δρακοντείοιο προσώπου.

> There lay the dragon stretched on the ground, dead, and over the corpse furious Ares shouted in heavy anger. By his wrath Cadmus was destined to change his limbs for a curling shape, and to have a strange aspect of dragon's countenance at the ends of the Illyrian country.

Perhaps the two-serpent necklace Aphrodite gave to Harmonia as a wedding gift (*Dion.* 5.171–172) prefigures the final metamorphosis of Cadmus and his wife into twin serpents.[6] We hear the complete story from Cadmus and Harmonia's daughter Agave, who says that she had a nightmare in which her parents were entwined by snakes; and that then Cronion (i.e., Zeus[7]) petrified these snakes (*Dion.* 44.107–118). At the end of the poem, we see how Agave's vision is about to become reality. Dionysus, who took revenge on Cadmus' family, shows his grandparents the divine oracles, which read (*Dion.* 46.364–367):

> Ἰλλυρίην δ᾽ ἐπὶ γαῖαν ἐς Ἑσπερίου στόμα πόντου
> Ἁρμονίην λιπόπατριν ὁμόστολον ἥλικι Κάδμῳ
> ἀμφοτέρους πόμπευεν ἀλήμονας, οἷς χρόνος ἕρπων
> ὤπασε πετρήεσσαν ἔχειν ὀφιώδεα μορφήν.

> Over the Illyrian country to the land of the Western sea he sped, and banished Harmonia with Cadmus her agemate, both wanderers, for whom creeping Time had in store a change into the shape of snaky stone.

6 Acosta-Hughes 2016, 522.
7 Vian and Fayant 2006, 133–134, s.v. Zeus.

In these words, Cadmus and his wife were told that they must immigrate to Illyria and live there until Chronos, the god of time (also imagined as a serpent), transforms them into stone snakes.

The sequel of the Cadmus story given in the *Dionysiaca* allows us to suppose that after killing the dragon, Cadmus either did not perform the expiatory rite according to Zeus' instructions, or performed it so unsuccessfully that he was unable to protect himself from Ares' wrath and prevent what was to happen to him and his family. Apparently, he was unable to unravel the threads of his own destiny spun by the Moirai (cf. *Dion.* 2.677–679).

3 The Tale of Helenus in the *Orphic Lithica*

3.1 *Before Sacrificing the Serpent*

The narration of the *Orphic Lithica* has a ring composition. The largest narrative, put into the mouth of a nameless worshiper of Helios (*Orph. L.* 1–774), contains a mineralogical lecture delivered by Theiodamas, "a wise man" (*Orph. L.* 165–772, cf. *Orph. L.* 94), which in turn contains a speech by Helenus, a son of Priam, who addresses Philoctetes, Poias' son, paralyzed with ophiophobia (*Orph. L.* 400–770). The third narrative is the strangest one. In it, Helenus discusses the magical properties of fifteen stones (of a total number of thirty-one minerals enumerated by Theiodamas),[8] inserts three acrostics between the lines,[9] and recommends an Assyrian sacrifice of a snake (*Orph. L.* 699–747).

A partial account of Helenus' life is woven into Theiodamas' and Helenus' narratives (*Orph. L.* 346–404, 686–697, 762–772). We can complete the story of Helenus, as told in the *Orphic Lithica*, with myths which are known from the other sources.

8 The minerals and fossils discussed by Helenus in the *Orphic Lithica* are the following: σιδερίτης, meteorite stone (418–456); ὀρείτης (456–460), which is the same as σιδερίτης; ὀφίτης, serpentine stone (461–473); γαγάτης, jet (474–493); σκορπίος, scorpion's stone (494–509); κουράλιον, coral (510–609); ἀχάτης λεοντοδέρης, eye-agate (610–632); μάραγδος, emerald; σάρδια, carnelian (614); ἀντιαχάτης, anti-agate (633–643); αἱματόεις, hematite (645–685); Ὀλύμπιος, Olympian stone (686–690); Λιπαραῖος, volcanic glass (691–697); νεβρίτης, shell of false margined cowry, *Erosaria nebrites* (748–754); πράσινος, green jasper (755–757); χαλάζιος, hard stone of quartz composition (758–761). Three of them (σιδερίτης, ὀρείτης, ὀφίτης) have already been discussed by Theiodamas (cf. 338–343, 360–387). For the identifications of the stones mentioned, see Kostov 2008; some of them are mine.

9 The three acrostics are: ἄλγος ("pain"), ναός ("temple") and δίκη ("punishment", *Orph. L.* 478–482, 491–494, 509–512). For all four acrostics in the *Orphic Lithica*, see Rebuffat 1995.

Helenus, born in Troy, was the son of King Priam and the twin brother of Cassandra (*Orph. L.* 764–765, 771). Once, when Helenus and Cassandra fell asleep in the temple of Apollo Thymbraeus,[10] two serpents crept in and licked the children's ears with their tongues, thus clearing them. Since that time, the siblings became prophets who never told a lie (Anticl., *FGrHist* 140 F 17).[11] Apollo taught the boy how to practice the art of divination (*Orph. L.* 400–404). Before and during the Trojan war Helenus, as a young seer, prophesied for his compatriots and became a renowned expert in augury (Hom. *Il.* 6.76; *Cypr.* 92). The Achaeans besieging Troy captured Helenus at Mount Ida and forced him to help them in their conquest of Troy (*Il. Parv.* fr. 1 Bernabé).

The motive for Helenus' collaboration with the Achaeans was his quarrel with Paris, his brother, and jealousy of Helen, Paris' beautiful wife (Conon 34, *FGrHist* 26 F 1). To foretell the future, Helenus performed a very strange ritual to animate a meteorite stone (σιδερίτης) that always prophesied the truth, and then went on to interrogate it (*Orph. L.* 360–387). The prophetic stone informed Helenus that the Greeks could never seize Troy without Philoctetes, an archer bitten by a viper, whom they had left behind on the island of Lemnos nine years earlier (*Il. Parv.* fr. 1 Bernabé; *Orph. L.* 358–359). Philoctetes, then, brought back from Lemnos, cured with a viper's stone (ἐχίτης), and restored to sanity by Machaon, went on to fight and kill Paris in battle. This way he gained the friendship of Helenus, who hated his brother (*Il. Parv.* fr. 1 Bernabé; *Orph. L.* 346–357, 393–395, 771–772).

According to the *Orphic Lithica*, Helenus (the third narrator) transmitted everything he learned from Apollo to Philoctetes. It was known to Theiodamas (the second narrator) who repeated this "revelation" word by word to the first narrator (unnamed), while they both were climbing upward to the altar of Helios (*Orph. L.* 93–104). Theiodamas' encounter with the first narrator took place after the death of Heracles (*Orph. L.* 772). Two Byzantine scholiasts, Joannes Tzetzes and Demetrius Moschus, believe that the first narrator can be identified with Orpheus (who was thought to be contemporary with Heracles, born a hundred years before the Trojan war), and that his interlocutor, Theiodamas, may be a son of Priam, the last king of Troy.[12] This would make Theiodamas a brother (or a half-brother) of Helenus. But the scholiasts seem not to acknowledge the chronological gap between Orpheus and Priam's sons.[13]

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10 The epithet "Thymbraeus" is derived from Thymbra, a city in Troad.

11 Galoppin 2016, 143–144.

12 Tz. *Chil.* 12.179–189, Moschus in Halleux and Schamp 1985, 80–81 (a summary of the *Lithica* given by Demetrius Moschus).

13 Halleux and Schamp 1985, 30–34.

3.2 *How Does the Expert Sacrifice a Serpent?*

According to the *Orphic Lithica*, Helenus gave the Trojan spy Dolon an Olympian stone (unidentified) that was to evoke sympathy for every person who wore it as an amulet (*Orph. L.* 686–690). In exchange for this gift, Dolon gave Helenus a Liparian stone, "more precious than gold," as he says, that had been bought by his father Eumedes, an envoy to Memnon, from the Assyrian Magi (*Orph. L.* 691–697). Supposedly, Helenus is referring to pitchstone or a natural volcanic glass, which derives its name from the Liparian island, or present-day Lipari (Thphr., *Lap.* 2.14; Pliny, *NH* 37.172). Helenus asserts (*Orph. L.* 698) that while using the Liparian stone, he performed the most bizarre ritual of all reported in the *Orphic Lithica*. We are told that the ritual took place outdoors, in a sacred space marked by several altars.[14] Helenus' report (*Orph. L.* 699–735) is divided into five parts.

(1) First, Helenus describes preliminaries, i.e., libations and hymnodies offered to Helios and Gaia:

πρῶτα μὲν οὖν σπένδοντας ἀναιμάκτων ἐπὶ βωμῶν
—οὐ γὰρ ἄγειν θέμις ἐστὶ θυηλὴν ἐμψύχοιο—
Ἥλιον εὐρύοπα κλῄζειν ὕμνοισιν ἄνωγα
καὶ χθόνα πίειραν, πάντων τροφὸν οὐθατόεσσαν.

First, when making libations upon bloodless altars—for the sacrifice of the living is not allowed by divine law—I command to invoke by hymns the wide-eyed Sun and the wealthy Earth, fruitful nurse of everything.[15]

Speaking of libations, he probably meant the so-called νηφάλια, or wineless libations of water (sometimes of honey) that were offered to the sun and other celestial deities (Polemon fr. 42 Preller; Phylarch., *FGrHist* 81 F 25).[16]

(2) Second, the Trojan seer burned a piece of Liparian stone, mentioned above (*Orph. L.* 692), whose smell attracted snakes. Serpents came forth from their holes and crawled to the altar upon which the pitchstone was burned. Then, he instructed his companions, young warriors dressed in white and armed with swords, on how to catch one of the large serpents:

14 Galoppin 2016, 144.

15 The edition of the *Orphic Lithica* used hereafter is that of Halleux and Schamp 1985. The English translation of the passage (*Orph. L.* 699–747) comes from Galoppin 2016, 161–162.

16 See also Halleux and Schamp 1985, 329 n. 9.

δεύτερον αὖτ' αἴθωνος ὑπὲρ λίθον Ἡφαίστοιο
τήκειν, ἡδείῃ ταναοὺς θέλγοντα δράκοντας
ὀδμῇ, τὴν ἄρα κεῖνοι ἀνερχομένην ἐσορῶντες,
σπερχόμενοι ποτὶ βωμόν, ἀολλέες ἐκπρομολόντες
χηραμόθεν, ῥώονται ἐφερπύζοντες ἅπαντες.
αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα λίνοιο νεόπλυτα φάρεα κοῦροι
ἑσσάμενοι τρεῖς, ὀξὺ φέρων ἄμφηκες ἕκαστος
ἆορ, ἀναρπάζειν ὄφιν αἰόλον, ὅς κε μάλιστα
κνίσσης ἱμείρων πυρὸς ἐγγύθι δινεύῃσι.

Secondly, melt above the fiery Hephaestus' fire this stone that enchants the long snakes by a sweet smell; they, seeing its smoke rise, haste to the altar, going forth in crowds out of their holes, all of them creeping in a rush. But then, three lads, wearing linen, newly washed mantles, each holding a sharp double-edged sword, seize a glittering snake, especially the one which, longing for the exhalation, rolls about close around the fire.

Helenus is speaking of δράκοντες, or immense, very long serpents. Thomas Galoppin argues that in the given context, the term δράκων refers to a real species, namely the four-lined snake (*Elaphe quatuorlineata*), which was present in the ancient Greek world and appeared in some mystery cults.[17] It reaches two meters in length.

(3) Third, the seer commanded the youths to butcher the serpent and cut its flesh into nine portions:

τοῦ δὲ διαμελεϊστὶ δαΐζειν ἐννέα μοίρας·
τρεῖς μὲν ἐπὶ κλῆσιν πανδερκέος ἠελίοιο,
τρεῖς δ' ἑτέρας γαίης ἐριβώλου λαοβοτείρης,
τρεῖς δὲ θεοπροπίης πολυΐδμονος, ἀψεύστοιο·
τὰς δὲ λέβης κεράμοιο τετυγμένος αἱματοέσσας
δεξάσθω· καὶ δῶρον ἐλάϊνον Ἀτρυτώνης
ἠδὲ μέθυ Βρομίοιο καλεσσιχόρου καταχεύειν,
ἐν δ' ἅλας ἀργεννοὺς βαλέειν, θεράποντας ἐδωδῆς·
ἐν δέ σφιν καὶ δριμὺν ἐπήλυδα κόκκον ἄνωγα

17 Galoppin 2016, 150–151.

μῖξαι ῥυσοχίτωνα, μελαγχροίην, ἐρίτιμον·
ἐν δὲ καὶ ὅσσα περ ἄλλα μετ᾽ ἀλλήλοισι μιγέντα
ἵμερον ἐσπέμπουσιν ἐδητύος ἀνθρώποισιν.

Limb by limb, let it be divided into nine portions: three to invoke the all-seeing Sun, three others for the very fertile Earth, feeder of people, and three for a very learned, trustful oracle. May a cauldron made of clay receive the bloody (flesh); and pour the oil, gift of the Unwearied, and the wine of Bromios who calls for the dance, add in white salt, companion of the victuals; I command also to mix into them a piquant, foreign, black-skinned, highly-prized grain with shriveled coat; and also as many other (ingredients) as necessary so that, mixed with one another, they send to men the desire to eat.

Of the nine portions, three pieces were offered to Helios, three others to Gaia, and three were left to the god of prophecy, Apollo. The sacrificers, instructed by Helenus, cooked all nine pieces of snake meat along with the serpent's blood, and flavored it with olive oil, wine, salt, and black pepper.

(4) Fourth, while the snake soup was boiling in the cauldron placed on a tripod, Helenus invoked the gods with their mystic names. The gods invoked were Helios, Gaia, and Apollo, as mentioned above. The magical invocation caused each god to descend and partake of the sacred mass—the three portions of snake flesh offered to him.

ὄφρα δ᾽ ἐνὶ τρίποδος κρέα γαστέρι δάμνατ᾽ ἐόντα,
τόφρα δὲ κικλήσκειν μακάρων ἄρρηκτον ἑκάστων
οὔνομα· τέρπονται γάρ, ἐπεί κέ τις ἐν τελετῇσι
μυστικὸν ἀείδῃσιν ἐπώνυμον οὐρανιώνων.
ἀρᾶσθαι δὲ Μέγαιραν ἀπόπροθι παφλάζοντος
σευέμεναι τρίποδος κακομήχανον· ἐς δ᾽ ἄρα τούς γε
πνεῦμα διϊπετὲς ἔνδον ἄγειν ἱερὰς ἐπὶ μοίρας.

While the meat is subdued in the belly of the tripod, summon the ineffable name of each of the blessed ones; for they are delighted when someone sings in the rituals the mystic name of the celestial gods. May the curses drive the mischief-plotting Megaera far away from the boiling tripod. Then, they lead the breath fallen from the sky within the sacred portions.

Helenus realized that while the gods were inhaling smoke of the sacrifice, the serpent's blood could attract Megaera, a bad daemon. The same Megaera occurs in the *Orphic Argonautica* (*Orph. A.* 968), a poem contemporaneous with the *Orphic Lithica*.[18] In that poem, the daemoness Megaera, one of the three Erinyes, is attracted by the black puppies' blood offered to Hecate, the goddess of magic. Ancient Greek magicians believed that sacrificial blood would attract every daemon, because daemons were reputed to feed themselves on exhalations from the blood.[19]

(5) When the banquet is finally ready, each participant must eat three portions of the cooked snake flesh from the tripod:

> ὁππότε δ' ἑψομένοισιν ἐπὶ κρεάεσσιν ἵκηται,
> δαίνυσθαι τότ' ἔπειτα κορέννυσθαι μεμαῶτας
> αὐτόθεν ἐκ τρίποδος· τὰ δὲ λείψανα γαῖα καλύπτοι·
> καί σφιν ἐπισπεῖσαι λευκὸν γάλα καὶ μέθυ ἡδὺ
> καὶ λίπ' ἐπήρατον αὖτε μελίσσης ἄνθιμον εἶδαρ …

> When it comes upon the cooked meat to be ready, may those who seek to feast be satiated immediately from the tripod; the earth shall hide the remains; and on that, white milk and sweet wine shall be poured, and furthermore, the delightsome oil or the flowered food of the bees.

The ritual ophiophagia ends with the final libations of milk, wine, olive oil, and honey that correspond to the preliminary libations of water.

Helenus asserts that he himself performed this ritual, although he reveals neither the names of his two companions nor the place where the sacrifice was performed (*Orph. L.* 698). Perhaps it was somewhere at Mount Ida where Helenus used to stay, because he speaks of coming back home and going through the city to his palace (*Orph. L.* 739–743).[20] It is not clear if Helenus patterned his snake sacrifice after the Assyrian Magi mentioned earlier (cf. *Orph. L.* 695). In any case, the ritual performed by Helenus reveals the influence of witchcraft and theurgy.

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18 The dates of both poems are conjectural.

19 Origen *Cels.* 8.30; Porph. *Abst.* 2.42.3–2.43.1. The esoteric doctrine of feeding daemons with bloody vapors goes back to Origen the Egyptian (third century AD), who was someone different from Origen of Alexandria, the famous Christian writer.

20 See below p. 392.

3.3 *After Sacrificing the Serpent*

The sacrifice is now over, but the participants are in danger because of eating the snake blood that attracts Megaera, the daemon of revenge. Therefore, it is time to perform a cathartic rite. The same three young men who sacrificed the serpent must put on their heads garlands of olive twigs and milkweed (πέπλος), which is described by Dioscorides as "a small shrub full of white juice" (*Mat. Med.* 4.167), and can be identified as *Euphorbia peplus*, a plant of toxic properties.[21] Crowned with olive leaves and milkweed, they must go home in pious silence. There, at home, they must perform another rite:

> καὶ στέψαι πλέξαντας ἀκρόδρυα καρποφόροιο
> παρθενικῆς ἀφελόντας ἐλαίης, ἀμφὶ δὲ κόρσαις
> σφωϊτεραις πέπλους ἑλέειν οἶκόνδε κιόντας·
> μηδὲ μεταστρωφᾶσθαι, ἐπεί κ᾽ ἀπονόσφι τράπησθε,
> ἀλλ᾽ αἰεὶ προτέρην ἐς ἀταρπιτὸν ὄσσε φέροντας
> ἔρχεσθ᾽ ἐς μέγαρον μηδὲ προτιμυθήσασθαι,
> εἴ κέν τις ξύμβληται ὁδίτης ἔστ᾽ ἂν ἵκησθε
> ἐς δόμον· ἔνθα δ᾽ ἔπειτα θυηλὰς ἀθανάτοισιν
> ἐξαῦτις ῥέζοντας ἀρώματα ποικίλα καίειν.
>
> And crowns plastered with the wood bearing fruits, removed from the virgin olive tree; and around one's own temples the milkweed shall be set on the way home. Do not turn around when you have reached far away; your two eyes should always be kept forward on the path. Go to the palace without addressing anyone, not even a traveler met on the road, before arriving at the house. Once inside the house, then, you shall burn mixed spices, performing again sacrifices to the immortals.

This expiatory rite consists of burning mixed spices. We do not know if the "mixed spices" (ἀρώματα ποικίλα) were similar to fumigation with the "mixed incense" (ποικίλα) recommended by the *Orphic Hymns* as appropriate offering to the cosmic gods, Pan and the Mother of the Gods (*Orph. H.* 11 and 27). If the author of the *Orphic Lithica* was an Egyptian (we can suppose that he probably was), he would be referring to the so-called κῦφι ἱερατικόν (*Papyri Graecae Magicae* 4.1313), a mixture of various types of incense and other aromatic ingredients used by Egyptian priests.

21 Beck 2005, 317.

After the serpent sacrifice and the cathartic rite have been completed, the participant (Helenus says of himself) is able to understand the speech of birds. This is what allows him to know the future:

> ταῦτ᾽ ἐγὼ ἐκτελέσας, ὅσατ᾽ ἔσσεται, ὅσσα τε κοῦφοι
> ὄρνιθες κλάζουσιν, ἐπίσταμαι, ὅσσα τε θῆρες
> ὠμησταὶ τετράπεζοι ἐνὶ σφίσιν ὠρύονται.

> After having performed these things, I know what will happen, what the light birds are screaming and what the carnivorous four-footed beasts are roaring to each other.

From these lines, one can infer that knowing the future was the only purpose of sacrificing a serpent; in other words, the snake sacrifice belonged to the divinatory techniques known to the Assyrian Magi who sold Eumedes the Liparian stone. Two paradoxographical tales relayed by Flavius Philostratus shed some light on the divinatory technique in question. Philostratus states that Arabs and Indians used to consume the hearts and livers of snakes in order to understand the speech of birds that foretell the future; this way, the Arabs and Indians were able to know what would happen.[22] Likewise, the Egyptian authority[23] quoted in Porphyry of Tyre recommends eating the hearts of some animals, especially falcons, ravens, and moles, to acquire their divinatory abilities.[24]

These tales allow us to complete the snake story in the *Orph. L.* 699–747. We can suppose that Helenus did not become a seer after eating the snake flesh. Instead, after consuming the serpent, he understood the speech of birds and beasts that anticipate future events. It was only in this way, via these wild animals, that he was informed about what was to happen.

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22 Philostr. *VA* 1.20.3, 3.9 "He learned this too through these Arabs, who are excellent in the knowledge and practice of this science. For indeed all Arabs share the ability to hear birds predicting everything that oracles do, and they understand dumb animals by eating the hearts of snakes, or by another account the livers."; "The city below the mountain is very large, and by their account is called Paraka. In the center of it there are dedicated many snake heads, since the Indians of that practice this kind of hunting from an early age. They are said also to understand the speech and advice of animals by eating either the heart or the liver of snake." Trans. Jones 2005.

23 Presumably Origen the Egyptian.

24 Porph. *Abst.* 2.48.1 "Those who want to take into themselves the souls of divinatory animals swallow the most important parts, such as the hearts of ravens or moles or falcons, and have the soul present in them, giving oracles like a god entering them together with the ingestion of the body." Trans. Clark 2000. For more examples, see Galoppin 2016, 141.

While it is clear that Helenus performed the eccentric ritual to know the future, it is unclear whose future he had in mind. Perhaps the answer can be found in mythical history. Mythographers say that after the fall of Troy, Helenus migrated to Greece together with Pyrrhus, the son of Achilles. This Pyrrhus did not return home to Thessaly, but instead colonized the land of Epirus due to prophecies given to him by Helenus (ἐκ τῶν Ἑλένου χρησμῶν, Paus. 1.11.1). Both heroes, then, went to Epirus, where Helenus ruled over the country after assassinating Pyrrhus and marrying Andromache, Hector's widow and Pyrrhus' wife. With her Helenus had a child, Cestrinus, but was succeeded by Molossus, son of Andromache and Pyrrhus (Paus. 1.11.1–2, 2.23.6). Perhaps the birds twittered about Helenus' journey to Epirus, where he was destined to live and die.

4 Conclusion: Nonnus versus Pseudo-Orpheus

What do these two stories, that of Cadmus as told in the *Dionysiaca* and that of Helenus in the *Orphic Lithica*, have in common? The most striking motif that links them is the sacrifice of a dragon or serpent (interchangeable terms in Greek) offered by the most ancient heroes: Cadmus, long before the Trojan war, and Helenus, just before the sack of Troy. The specific details differ, of course, but the most important element of the snake sacrifice is common to both. The blood of the slain dragon/serpent is shown as provoking Ares' wrath in the *Dionysiaca* and as attracting Megaera, a daemoness, in the *Orphic Lithica*. Therefore, sacrificing a dragon/serpent puts the man who killed it in danger. It follows that expiation is needed and cathartic rites are demanded to avert Ares and Megaera from exacting revenge on the sacrificers.

Both poems depict the cathartic rites that must be performed after a dragon/serpent is sacrificed. In the *Dionysiaca*, the cathartic rite is described as a nocturnal ceremony with the use of serpentine stone, the burning of bezoars, and prayers to the constellations of the Serpent and the Serpent-holder that are visible in the night sky. On the other hand, the anonymous author of the *Orphic Lithica* recommends performing the cathartic rite consisting of burning mixed spices to the gods at home. Perhaps the mixed spices may be interpreted as the Egyptian aromatic mixture called *kyphi*, and the gods as the cosmic deities Gaia and Helios. However, both the Phoenician Cadmus, instructed by Zeus, and the Trojan Helenus, taught by Apollo, could not avoid punishment; for we are told that they were exiled to the northern countries: Cadmus to Illyria and Helenus to Epirus. Thus, the curse put upon the dragon/serpent killer was impossible to lift.

The final question that remains is how we know that the rites described in the *Dionysiaca* and the *Orphic Lithica* were really cathartic rites. The answer can be found in a text ascribed to Julian the Chaldean, a renowned expert in the occult sciences, who defined cathartic rites as those performed with the use of "stones, aromatic herbs, and incantations" (λίθοις καὶ πόαις καὶ ἐπῳδαῖς, Psellus, *Phil. min.* II.38). All of these were used by Cadmus and Helenus in the rites they performed, even if in vain.

The occurrence of a cathartic rite is a hallmark of both stories we have analyzed. To compare, the untitled alchemic treatise on Ouroboros "the Tail-eater," from Late Antique Egypt, encourages an alchemist to kill the dragon Ouroboros, the temple guardian: he is to skin it by separating the flesh from the bones and to construct a ladder out of the bones with which to enter the temple.[25] The successful slaughter is glorified in triumphant words as being the symbolic fulfillment of alchemic operations aimed at producing gold out of base metals. There is no room for expiation, no need of catharsis, no fear of punishment.

The snake stories, which have been discussed above, reproduce the same pattern consisting of three motifs: a hunting scene, the sacrifice of a dragon/serpent, and a cathartic rite. In the *Orphic Lithica*, these three elements appear in chronological order, whereas in the *Dionysiaca* the narrated order of events is inverted, and the cathartic rite, which should take place after the sacrifice, occurs before the fight against the dragon due to the sophisticated composition of Nonnus' epic, which anticipates certain future scenes. In any case, the logical sequence of events is identical in both poems.

What follows is that both poets must have been influenced by the same authority in sacrifices, divination, esoterica, occultism, and the like. It is difficult to say who it was that inspired them: Julian the Chaldean, a demonologist (fl. AD 115); his son Julian the Theurgist who composed the divinely inspired *Chaldean Oracles* (c. AD 173); or someone else. Indeed, the mid-fifth century

25 *CAAG* 1.5 "Here is the mystery: the tail-eater serpent is a composition which as a whole is devoured and melted away, dissolved and transformed by fermentation (or putrefaction). First he becomes dark-green, next yellow, and finally as purple as cinnabar, and it is precisely, as he says, the cinnabar of the philosophers. His belly and his back are yellow, his head is dark-green, his four feet constitute a tetrasomy, his three ears are three sublimed vapors … Please follow my recipe carefully and see how your goal is accomplished. There is a temple-guarding dragon that must be killed. You sacrifice and skin him by separating his flesh from the bones. From his bones make a ladder and mount thereon, and enter the temple gate. There, you will find what you are looking for: the Priest or the Man of Copper whom nature transforms into the Man of Silver and thence, if you will wait a few days, into the Man of Gold." Translation is my own.

AD that produced both the *Dionysiaca* and the *Orphic Lithica* was marked by a revival of theurgy, as well as by increasing interest in the *Chaldean Oracles* and related literature.[26]

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26 The popularity of theurgy in the mid-fifth century AD and the Chaldean studies in the Neoplatonic school of philosophy are well attested by Marinus, the biographer of Proclus. See Marin. *Proc.* 26, 28.

CHAPTER 20

The Mystic Reception of Theocritus in Late Antiquity

Konstantinos Spanoudakis

> at nunc etiam sacerdotes dei omissis evangeliis et prophetis videmus … amatoria bucolicorum versuum verba cantare.
>
> HIERONYMUS Epist. 21.13.9

∵

An examination of Theocritean papyri reveals a large number copied in Late Antiquity, between the second and the sixth century AD.[1] A good number of scholiasts are known from the second century AD, namely Amarantus of Alexandria, who was broadly used later, Munatius of Tralles, a teacher of Herodes Atticus, and his opponent in the Theocritean scholia Theaetetus. A critic recently described the fourth to the sixth centuries AD as "a [period of] revival of Theocritean studies."[2] According to his Suidas vita (μ 194 Adler) Marianus of Eleutheropolis (fifth/sixth century AD) produced paraphrases of Hellenistic poems in iambic trimeters including paraphrases of Theocritus. Late Antique poetry clearly demonstrates that Theocritus was read and imitated.[3]

To take Nonnus as an example, in the proem of the *Dionysiaca* Proteus, who is a metaphor for Nonnus' ποικίλον poem, transforms himself in a tree νόθον ψιθύρισμα τιταίνων (*Dion.* 1.31). This alludes to the opening phrase of Theocritus' collection of poems, 1.1 ἁδύ τι τὸ ψιθύρισμα ("a sweet thing is the whispering"),[4] thereby underscoring, as Robert Shorrock observed, the theme of competition with the literary past.[5] Besides, it has long been recognized that Hymnus'

1 Gallavotti 1993, 8–9; Torallas Tovar and Worp 2009; Meliadò 2011.
2 On these commentators of Theocritus see Belcher 2005; Matthaios 2015, 244–245. The quotation is from Dickey 2015, 513.
3 See the material assembled and evaluated by Agosti 2008 and 2013. Also Meyer 2014, 228–229.
4 Translations of Theocritus are by Hopkinson 2015.
5 Shorrock 2008, 104–105.

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lament in *Dion.* 15.370–422 is modeled on the lament of Daphnis in Theocritus' first *Idyll.*[6] In the *Paraphrasis* too, at the end of the poem (21.142) Nonnus uses again a Theocritean word (νεοτευχής, referring to the "newly fashioned" cup, a symbol of Theocritus' new poetry, in *Id.* 1.28) to characterize the "endless newly written books" (βίβλους τοσσατίας νεοτευχέας) necessary to record Jesus' miracles. The metapoetic notion of the term is retained: the last verses of the *Paraphrasis* can be read as a "declaration" of poetics affirming the superiority of the *new* Christian poetry.[7] The poem itself is embellished with two scenes of bucolic character: (a) the amplification in the description of the Good Shepherd followed by docile flocks in *Par.* 10.6–16 and (b) the description of the Kedron valley in *Par.* 18.2–11. The construction of a new world, even if not entirely faithful to reality, would appeal to Christian metaphysical beliefs. Christian poets would happily "read" pastoral images as a prefiguration of the paradise. In a comparable context, it had not been noticed until recently that a verse of Theocritus is recalled in the highly spiritual context of the ever-regenerating water of Christ's intellectual, esoteric source (*Par.* 4.68 πηγῆς ἐνδομύχοιο ... ἔμπεδον ὕδωρ, "the clandestine water of an innermost source"): *Par.* 4.103 (Christian spiritual worship to supplant Jewish worship performed) ἱκέσιον κλίνοντες ἐρειδόμενον γόνυ πέτρῃ ("as they bend a supplicatory knee leaning their knee on the rock") resonates with Theoc. 7.7 (Chalcon created spring Bourina) εὖ ἐνερεισάμενος πέτρᾳ γόνυ ("setting his knee firmly against the rock").[8] The imitation provides a conspicuous example of Late Antique spiritualization of a "bucolic" scene. While in the *Dionysiaca* the plan is that of literary competition, in the *Paraphrasis* the employment of the Theocritean word implies also ideological resonances, revealing itself eventually as a *Kontrastimitation* of a prestigious model now overcome by the ultimate poetry there can be, the Christian poetry.

6 Harries 2006, 530–536.

7 Agosti 2001, 95–96; Agosti 2009, 118. *Contra*: Faulkner 2014, 207–208.

8 Spanoudakis 2011a, 187 n. 4. Earlier in ch. 4 of the *Paraphrasis* Nonnus seems to echo Callimachus: *Par.* 4.11 δι' εὐύδρου Σαμαρείης ~ Call. *Hec.* fr. 69.8 Hollis ἀπ' εὐύδρου Μαραθῶνος.

1 The Mystic Bucolic

Bucolic has always had a mystic allure. Bucolic terminology was adopted at least in Orphic and Dionysiac ambience, where leading members of their respective associations were designated as βουκόλοι.[9] The so-called *Bucolic Prolegomena* in an essay entitled "The Discovery of Bucolic Poetry" (Εὕρεσις τῶν βουκολικῶν)[10] promulgate a cultic origin of bucolic song suggesting three possibilities, all associated with the worship of Artemis, a goddess conspicuously absent in Theocritus: the worship of Artemis Karyatis in Lacaedemon, the worship of Artemis in Tyndaris in Sicily, and the worship of Artemis in Syracuse, in which feature local ἀγροῖκοι with breads displaying figures of animals, sacks full of seeds, and wine in wineskins, having on their heads garlands and deer-horns and holding a throwing-stick in their hands. Dressed like that they engage in a singing contest with hymns in honor of Artemis and the winner takes the bread of the defeated as a prize. The author of the *Prolegomena* espouses the third possibility (ὁ δὲ ἀληθὴς λόγος οὗτος). Although the association of Theocritean bucolic with any cult is highly disputed (and perhaps unlikely), the fact that ancient scholarship traced generic features of the bucolic song, such as the song-contest with a prize, the rustic clothing, the throwing-stick, and the Syracusan origin, in recondite cults of Artemis is significant by itself.

In a different context, it has not been widely observed that Theocritus was known to Neoplatonists and verses of the poet were adapted in philosophical contexts. Plotinus, the founder of Neoplatonism, when attempting a hierarchy of kinds of beauty (καλόν) and explaining how the soul imparts to bodies their beauty, seems to recall a verse of Theocritus: Plot. 1.6.6.31–32 (ψυχή) ὧν ἂν ἐφάψηται καὶ κρατῇ, καλὰ ταῦτα, ὡς δυνατὸν αὐτοῖς μεταλαβεῖν, ποιεῖ ("it makes everything it grasps and masters beautiful, as far as they are capable of participation")[11] resonates with Theoc. 10.25 (Muses Pierides) ὧν γάρ χ' ἅψησθε, θεαί, καλὰ πάντα ποεῖτε ("for all things you touch, goddesses, you make beautiful"). Then the formulation is adopted from Plotinus to be applied to the Holy Spirit by Cyril Jer. *Myst. cat.* 5.7 παντὸς γὰρ οὗ ἂν ἐφάψητε τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα,

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9 See Morand 2001, 249–281; Bernabé 2005 on *Orph.fr.* 585.7–8 ἀρχιβουκόλοι … βουκόλοι ἱεροί; Gerlaud 1994 on Nonn. *Dion.* 16.156 μετὰ βουκόλον Ὕμνον ὀλολῶτα.

10 The *Bucolic Prolegomena* preface Wendel's edition of the Theocritean scholia (2–4). The origin of the essay is unknown but the second century AD is as good a suggestion as any other. Information contained therein was then reproduced in Late Antiquity by Virgil commentators such as Probus and Diomedes.

11 Translation by Armstrong 1966.

τοῦτο ἡγίασται καὶ μεταβέβληται ("for everything that the Holy Spirit grasps, this becomes holy and changes its nature").

In a recently rediscovered essay, Porphyry,[12] a disciple of Plotinus and editor of his work, attempts to explain a well-known mystic formula. The essay is entitled: Πορφυρίου φιλοσόφου, Περὶ τοῦ κναξζβιχθυπτησφλεγμωδροψ· ἑρμηνεία. In order to explain the initial part of the formula he compares the Theocritean absolute hapax vocable κνάκων "goat":[13]

> κνὰξ μὲν γάρ ἐστιν ὁ τράγος κατὰ ἀποκοπὴν τῶν στοιχείων τοῦ κων, ἢ καὶ πάλιν ἀφαιρέσει τοῦ ξ· κνάκων γὰρ καλεῖται, ὡς καὶ Θεόκριτος ἐν βουκόλοις [Βουκολικοῖς Bentley] λέγει.

> Κνάξ is the he-goat by excision of the letters κων or, otherwise, by elimination of the letter ξ; because he is called κνάκων, as Theocritus says in his bucolic [poems].

Of all poems of Theocritus, it was the seventh *Idyll* that was most appealing to spiritual or mystic readings. It is not hard to see why: Theocritus' poems are generally enigmatic but the seventh *Idyll* is the most enigmatic of them all. This leaves considerable room for "interpretation" according to the reader's disposition. The poem recounts an accidental meeting and a poetic dialogue on the way to the Coan countryside, a structure that bears significant affinities with Platonic dialogues such as the opening of *Lysis* and the opening of the *Republic*.[14] The notion of a mystic ὁδός, traversed by *mystai* or leading to a mystic place, often comes up in such contexts.[15] Moreover, the poem features a disguised goatherd, Lycidas, the songs exchanged by both Lycidas and Simichidas are anything but enigmatic and the poem is rounded off by *loca amoena* at the beginning and the end. The wayfarers' journey in the Coan countryside, the meeting with Lycidas, the exchange of songs could be viewed as

12 Porphyry's essay is transmitted in Ms. Bodl. Gr. Barocci 50 of the tenth century. It was first published in Bentley's *Epistula ad Millium* as an appendix to *Joannis Antiocheni cognomento Malalae Historia Chronica cum interpret. et notis Edm. Chilmeadi*, Oxford 1691, then rediscovered and re-published by Callahan 1995. It is not included in A. Smith's edition of the fragments of Porphyry (Teubner 1993).

13 Callahan 1995, 217 (text), 222 (comment).

14 See Hunter 1999, 145, including the possible appropriation of Plato as a Sicilian writer.

15 Notably in Posidippus' *sphragis Suppl. Hell.* 705.25 = 118.25 Austin and Bastianini μυστικὸν οἶμον ἐπὶ Ῥαδάμανθυν ἱκοίμην. See *Suppl. Hell.* ad loc.; Di Nino 2010, 21–23 where a reference to the golden leaf of Hipponion (c. 400 BC) *Orph. fr.* 474.15–16 Bernabé ὁδὸν ἔρχεα⟨ι⟩ ἅν τε καὶ ἄλλοι / μύσται καὶ βάχχοι ἱερὰν στείχουσι κλε⟨ε⟩ινοί.

an initiation process eventually celebrated when the wayfarers reach the final idealized *locus*. Above all, the seventh *Idyll* contains an initiation of "Hesiodic" type (Hesiod in Late Antiquity is a mystic poet par excellence, see below on his third/fourth century ethopoea), when Lycidas hands over to Simichidas his stick, Theoc. 7.42–44:

> ὁ δ᾽ αἰπόλος ἁδὺ γελάσσας,
> 'τάν τοι', ἔφα, 'κορύναν δωρύττομαι, οὕνεκεν ἐσσί
> πᾶν ἐπ᾽ ἀλαθείᾳ πεπλασμένον ἐκ Διὸς ἔρνος'.

> And with a laugh the goatherd said, "I present you with this stick of mine, because you are a sapling molded for truth by Zeus."

The scene echoes Hesiod's initiation into poetry in *Theog*. 30–32 καί μοι σκῆπτρον ἔδον δάφνης ἐριθηλέος ὄζον / δρέψασαι, θηητόν· ἐνέπνευσαν δέ μοι αὐδήν / θέσπιν ("and they plucked a staff, a branch of luxuriant laurel, a marvel, and gave it to me; and they breathed a divine voice into me").[16] Even the inspiration Simichidas receives from the bucolic Muses follows the Hesiodic mold: Theoc. 7.91–93 πολλὰ μὲν ἄλλα / Νύμφαι κἠμὲ δίδαξαν ἀν᾽ ὤρεα βουκολέοντα / ἐσθλά ("the Nymphs [Muses] have taught me too many good songs as I tended my herd in the hills") resonates with Hes. *Theog*. 22–23 αἵ νύ ποθ᾽ Ἡσίοδον καλὴν ἐδίδαξαν ἀοιδήν, / ἄρνας ποιμαίνονθ᾽ Ἑλικῶνος ὕπο ζαθέοιο ("one time they taught Hesiod beautiful song while he was pasturing lambs under holy Helicon"). Hesiod is then contemptuously addressed by the Muses in *Theog*. 26 ποιμένες ἄγραυλοι ("field-dwelling shepherds"). When the *Thalysia* is read from a certain perspective, it would not take much to turn Theocritus into a θεόληπτος ποιητής of the Hesiodic mold. The Hesiodic passage is the origin of the poet's sudden inspiration, a motif that was to enjoy a lasting career including Callimachus (*Aet*. frr. 2, 112.5 Harder) and Quintus of Smyrna (*Posthom*. 12.308–312), both allegedly inspired by the Muses as they were pasturing their flocks. Hesiod himself is clearly attributed a kind of pastoral in the ethopoea *P.Oxy*. L.3537r (= Hesiod T 95 Most) of the third or fourth century AD. In this Hesiod is described as μηλονόμον,[17] as he is in Callimachus *Aet*. fr. 2.1 Harder ποιμένι μῆλα νέμοντι … / Ἡσιόδῳ and in Nonnus' *Dion*. 13.76 ἀσιγήτοιο νομῆος /. The adjective ἀσίγη-

16 Translations of Hesiod are by Most 2018.

17 Successfully corrected by Glenn Most for the papyrus' μηλονόμοι [Μοῦσαι] which is absurd. Most's correction lays bare the central paradox of the ethopoea: the Muses have taught high poetry to a tender of sheep (cf. footnote 19). It is further supported by Theoc. 7.92 βουκολέοντα. On Hesiod giving up pastoral, see West 1984, 33.

τος often describes oracles and,[18] paradoxically juxtaposed to νομῆος, it seems again to imply the pastor who turned into a theologian poet.[19] What is implied in Nonnus is explicitly stated in Hesiod's ethopoea, in which Hesiod explicitly renounces pastoral for the loftiest kind of poetry, the theological poetry, vv. 17–22:

> ο]ὐ γὰρ ἀοιδήν
> Παύρην βουκολικ[ὴν ἀναβάλλο]μαι, οὐδ' ὅσ' ἀφαυροί
> Ῥηιδίως μέλπουσι[ἀγρο]ιῶται,
> Οὐδέ μοι αἰπολικὴ [ ] εὔα(δ)ε σῦριγξ·
> Σὺν δ' αὐτοῖς καλά[μοισιν ἀπέσ]τυγον ἄγριον ἠχήν.
> Ἐκ Διὸς ἐκ Μουσέων [ ] ξ οὐράνιοί μοι
> Φαίνονται πυλεῶν[ες, ὁρῶ δ' εἰς θ]εῖα μέλαθρα·
> Ἤδη δ' ἀείδειν ἐθέλ[ω …

> for not small bucolic poem [do I begin to sing,] nor what the feeble rustics easily sing [ ], nor does the goatherd's pipe please me [ ]: I have come to loathe its rustic sound together with [the reeds] themselves. From Zeus, from the Muses [ ]. The heavenly gates are revealed to me, [and I see into] the halls of the gods. Now I begin to sing …[20]

2 The Orphic *Lithica*

The emperor Julian was certainly familiar with Theocritus, as he was familiar with other Hellenistic poets.[21] He cites three times three different verses from *Idyll* 12: explicitly in *Epistle* 96 (to Libanius) 374c (send your response soon) εἴπερ ἀληθῆ φησιν ὁ Σικελιώτης ποιητής, ἐν ἤματι φάσκων τοὺς ποθοῦντας γηράσκειν ("if indeed the Sicilian poet says the truth when he says that those who feel longing grow old in a day") ~ Theoc. 12.2 οἱ δὲ ποθεῦντες ἐν ἤματι γηράσκουσιν, and twice anonymously, in his funerary oration *Ἐπὶ τῇ ἐξόδῳ τοῦ ἀγαθοτάτου Σαλουστίου* 244c concerning Scipio's friendship with Laelius φιληθείς, τὸ λεγό-

18 On oracles as endowed with voice see Lightfoot in this volume, esp. p. 322–323.

19 Ox- or goat-herds can denote the rustic alien to literature: in the late Hellenistic verse inscription *IMEG* 34 = *GVI* 1312 βουκόλοι ἄνδρες and μηλονόμοι are contrasted to Μουσείοις καμ[άτο]ις τεθραμμέν' ὁδῖτα. See Christian 2015, 313–314.

20 Translation by Most 2018.

21 In his epistle 10 (to Alypius), 403d2 Julian cites Callimachus *Iamb.* fr. 191.4 οὐ μάχην ἀείδοντας τὴν Βουπάλειον κατὰ τὸν Κυρηναῖον ποιητήν.

μενον, "ἴσῳ ζυγῷ" alluding to Theoc. 12.15 ἀλλήλους δ' ἐφίλησαν ἴσῳ ζυγῷ ("they loved one another in an equal yoke") and in the *Misopogon* 3.338d (a beard is troublesome) οὐκ ἐπιτρέπων καθαρὰ λείοις καὶ διὰ τοῦτο οἶμαι γλυκερωτέροις χείλεσι χείλη προσμάττειν, ὅπερ ἤδη τις ἔφη τῶν ἐργασαμένων ξὺν τῷ Πανὶ καὶ τῇ Καλλιόπῃ εἰς τὸν Δάφνιν ποιήματα ("since it does not allow one to press shaven 'lips to other lips more sweetly' because they are smooth, I suppose as has been said already by one of those who with the aid of Pan and Calliope composed poems in honor of Daphnis").[22] In the last passage the verbal citation hails from *Idyll* 12.32 ὅς δε κε προσμάξῃ γλυκερώτερα χείλεσι χείλη ("and whoever most sweetly presses lips on lips"), yet the reference to Pan and Daphnis allude to the first, not the twelfth *Idyll*. There is nothing mystic in these references, Theocritus is rather recalled for a proverb-like expression, a heartfelt friendship, which is the subject of *Idyll* 12, and a romantic kiss (during a kissing contest) recalled in conjunction with reminiscences from the introductory and programmatic idyll heading the collection. *Idyll* 12 involving "obscure cults, etymology … touchstones, the highly optimistic hope for eternal fame"[23] and a kissing contest at Megara would appeal to a learned and philosophy-inclined reader.

The Orphic *Lithica* is most probably a product of a member of the Neoplatonic circle gravitating around Julian (d. 363) and his master Maximus of Ephesus (d. 372), whose decapitation the poem laments in vv. 70–81.[24] The poem is prefaced by two proems:[25] the first (1–90) is set under the auspices of Hermes and consists of a mystic teaching exposing the benefits of initiation. The second (91–171) is a narrative providing an aetion for the sacrifice to Helios that is underway: as the anonymous poet (for some: Orpheus) walks into a geographically unspecified countryside in order to sacrifice to Helios, he encounters the mysterious Theiodamas, to whom he recounts his nearly lethal confrontation with a chthonic snake when he was a boy. Invited by the poet to join him, Theiodamas will subsequently, on the way to the altar of Helios, reveal the secret powers of the stones. As in bucolic, the place is unspecified. The so-called second prologue is rounded off by reminiscences from Theocritus' seventh *Idyll*. In Theocritus' poem features of a *locus amoenus* around the Coan spring Bourina

22 Translation by Wright 1913.

23 The quotation is from Hopkinson 2015, 177.

24 See Giannakis 1982, 11–13; Livrea 1992, 204–206 (for the authorship mentioning Theodorus [*PLRE* I, s.n. 8] whom Julian appointed pagan high priest of Asia in 362); Livrea 2014, 55–57; Zito 2012, 2013, 172–173.

25 The unity of the two proems is defended by Brioso Sánchez 1996, arguing against the possibility of two independent proems conglomerated at a later stage.

are pointedly and lavishly developed at the end of the poem, when the three wayfarers reach their destination to the Coan countryside, so that all action is embraced by two interconnected idyllic scenes. The adoption of this structure is part of the seventh *Idyll*'s reception, as is demonstrated by a poem as diverse from the Orphic *Lithica* as the *De humana natura* (*Carmina* 1.2.14) by Gregory of Nazianzus. That poem begins and ends with an idyllic scenery in the form of a *cyclos* combining elements from Plato's *Phaedrus*, Sappho, and Theocritus' seventh *Idyll*. The structure is clearly owed to Theocritus 7 and is unparalleled in Gregory's poetic output.[26]

From a narratological perspective the primary narrator in both poems recounts an event that he recollects with strong sentimental involvement as a life's experience. The encounter with Theiodamas in *Lith.* 91–94 replays the encounter of the "poet" Simichidas with mysterious Lycidas in Theoc. 7.10–14. Also, in the conclusion of the section (159–163) the scenery surrounding the altar of Helios resembles the *locus* around the Coan sacred spring Bourina in Theoc. 7.7–9 and the final destination *locus* in 7.135–139.[27] Although in Theocritus the scene is first described, and then at the end of the poem an uncannily similar scene is reached by the wayfarers as their destination, in the *Lithica* the *locus* is both times a destination scene. Later, around the middle of the *Lithica* (334–343), Theiodamas' didactic narrative breaks off as a transition to the second part of the poem which treats stones curing snakebites. The structure looks suspiciously similar to the exchange of songs in Theocritus 7 interrupted by a short statement by Simichidas (90–95). In these verses, *Lith.* 338 νῦν δ' ἐπεὶ ἀτραπιτοῖο πολὺ πλέον ἄμμι λέλειπται ("but now, since the greater part of our journey is ahead of us") has been compared with Theoc. 7.10–11 κοὔπω τὰν μεσάταν ὁδὸν ἄνυμες, οὐδὲ τὸ σᾶμα / ἁμῖν τὸ Βρασίλα κατεφαίνετο ("we had not yet reached the midpoint of our journey and the tomb of Brasilas had not come in sight"), from the meeting scene with Lycidas. And then at the very end the poem concludes with a reference to the earlier idyllic scene upon arrival at the altar of Helios, *Lith.* 773–774 νῶι δὲ ποιήεσσαν ἐς ἀκρώρειαν ἰοῦσι / τρηχεῖαν μάλα μῦθοι ἀταρπιτὸν ἐπρήυναν ("and we, whilst we were walking to the grassy mountain-top, with conversation smoothed the rugged road") which recalls the arrival of the wayfarers at the estate of the Coan aristocrats Phrasidamos and Antigenes in Theoc. 7.131 f. It is thereby evident that not only the second prologue but crucial junctures in the structure of the poem are made to keep up the appearances of the Theocritean poem.

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26 Domiter 1999, 14 "die Naturschilderung des bukolischen Rahmens ... der ... innerhalb des poetischen Oeuvres Gregor's singulär ist."

27 See Halleux and Schamp 1985, 12–20; Agosti 2008, 55; Zito 2013, 161–162, 165; 2017, 705–706.

Such a reception combines grace with *Mystik*. The affinities noted above precede and follow a meeting; like in Theocritus two idyllic *loca* precede and follow the meeting of Lycidas and Simichidas. Halleux and Schamp (1985, 13) reckon that "il ne s' agit ici que d' un cadre de composition," yet the role of the scenery appears to be instrumental. The idyllic scenery is directly associated with the event of the accidental confrontation of the poet as a boy with a chthonic snake: 105 *ἔνθα νεογνὸς ἐών κτλ*. Most importantly, the *Thalysia* are clearly read as a poem describing an initiation.

Theocritus' seventh *Idyll* is generally believed to be intimately associated with Philitas' lost poem *Demeter*, which apparently described the adventures of the goddess on the island of Cos (Schol. Theoc. 7.5–9 f, 79.6 Wendel), where Demeter enjoyed an ancient and widespread worship.[28] I have elsewhere raised the possibility that *Demeter* might have featured a scene in which a boy was attacked by a gecko and saved by the goddess under her medical capacity.[29] The inactivity of the lizard in Theoc. 7.21–22 μεσαμέριον … / ἁνίκα δὴ καὶ σαῦρος ἐν αἱμασιαῖσι καθεύδει ("in the middle of the day, when even the lizard sleeps in the walls") and the little boy sitting unconcerned on a wall of an orchard (ἐφ' αἱμασιαῖσι) in Theoc. 1.47–48 would in that case be tense scenes and ancient scholia ad locc. could preserve information about the underlying texts. Even more interesting for magi would be the fact that Philitas later evolved to become an hierophant, who has taught the great secrets of poetry in a cave.[30]

In the encounter scene, *Lith.* 93–94 Ἠελίῳ γὰρ ἄγων ἱερήιον ἀντεβόλησα / ἀγρόθεν ἄστυδ' ἰόντι περίφρονι Θειοδάμαντι ("as I was bearing a sacrifice to Helios, I met wise Theiodamas walking from the country to the town") the poet heads to a sacrifice to Helios as the wayfarers in Theocritus head to a celebration of first fruit offering (θαλύσια) to Demeter. As the narrator meets Theiodamas (*Lith.* 93 ἀντεβόλησα), so Simichidas and his friends meet Lycidas (Theoc. 7.12 εὕρομες). The direction of Theiodamas from the countryside to town (*Lith.* 94 ἀγρόθεν ἄστυδ' ἰόντι) is conceivably the same as that of Lycidas in the *Thalysia* since Simichidas and his friends come from the opposite direction from town to the countryside (Theoc. 7.1–2 εἱς τὸν Ἅλεντα / εἵρπομες ἐκ πόλιος, "on our way from town to the Haleis"). Like Theiodamas (94 ἰόντι) so Lycidas is on his

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28 See Sherwin-White 1978, 305–312.

29 Spanoudakis 2002, 237 f. The lizard, a serpent of interest to magicians as an impersonation of maleficent forces, is an enemy of Demeter (Nic. *Ther.* 483–487, *Heteroioumena* fr. 56 Schneider with Overduin 2015, 362–363, 543–546).

30 Cf. Propertius 3.1.1 *Coi sacra Philitae* and Longus 2.3.2 (Philetas *praeceptor amoris*) ἥκω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅσα εἶδον μηνύσων, ὅσα ἤκουσα ἀπαγγελῶν.

way (7.11 ὁδίταν). Theiodamas is περίφρων (94), like Lycidas is ἐσθλός (7.12).[31] Both narrators are heading to banquets: the *Lithica* narrator in *Lith.* 98 μοι στείχοντι μετ' εἰλαπίνην and Simichidas in Theoc. 7.31–32 ἑταῖροι / ἀνέρες … δαῖτα τελεῦντι, 23 μετὰ δαῖτ' … ἐπείγεαι. In fact, as Francis Vian pointed out, *Lith.* 98 μετ' εἰλαπίνην immediately echoes Theoc. 7.24 μετὰ δαῖτα.[32] Yet, the verbal echo is not fortuitous: Phrasidamus and Antigenes offer Demeter a banquet as their ancestors Chalcon and Antagoras did (Schol. Theoc. 7.5–9f οὗτοι δέ εἰσιν οἱ … ὑποδεδεγμένοι τὴν Δήμητραν, καθ' ὃν καιρὸν περιῄει τὴν Κόρην ζητοῦσα, "these [sc. Chalcon and Antagoras] are the ones who welcomed Demeter [on the island of Cos] at the time she was wandering looking for Kore"). This is not dissimilar to the fact that the narrator keeps up the good habit of his father offering a sacrifice to Helios (*Lith.* 151–157). The narrator also says that Theiodamas was gratefully sent to him by a god (98–99 θεὸς αὐτός / ὦρσεν ὑπαντιάσαι) like Simichidas says he chanced upon Lycidas "with the help of the Muses" (7.12 σὺν Μοίσαισι … εὕρομες). The narrator of the *Lithica* professes to be leading a group of friends with him annually: 157–158 ἔρχομ' ἐς ἀκρώρειαν, ἄγων χορὸν ἡδὺν ἑταίρων· / σὺν δέ σφιν καὶ τώδε … κύνε βήτην ("I come to the mountain-top, leading a happy group of comrades; together with them these hounds come"). The line reproduces the conditions of the *Thalysia* where Simichidas is escorted by two friends: 7.1–2 ἐγών τε καὶ Εὔκριτος εἰς τὸν Ἅλεντα / εἵρπομες … σὺν καὶ τρίτος ἄμμιν Ἀμύντας ("I and Eucritus were on our way … to the Haleis, and Amyntas made a third with us"). It is plain that the expression used for the company of the dogs directly imitates the Theocritean expression used for the company of Amyntas. The latter's "defensive" name could be thought to somehow bring him into association with the possibly apotropaic hounds escorting the *Lithica* narrator. Although the friends (ἑταῖροι) are mentioned in the *Lithica* they appear nowhere in the poem. Likewise, in the *Thalysia* the company of Theocritus are mentioned by name, but play no role whatsoever in the action or in the dialogues of the poem.

In *Lith.* 100–102 θυσίαι δ' ἱεροπρεπέες τελέθουσιν, / ἃς ἀγαθοὶ ῥέζουσι βροτοί· γάνυται δὲ φίλον κῆρ / ἀθανάτων, εὖτ' ἄν σφι χοροὺς ἀνάγωσιν ἄριστοι ("devout sacrifices are taking place, whom noble men perform; the heart of the immortals rejoices, when the noblest celebrate their rites"), those offering the sacrifice are twice described as "noble" (101 ἀγαθοί, 102 ἄριστοι) like those offering θαλύσια in Theocritus are εἴ τί περ ἐσθλόν / χαῶν τῶν ἐπάνωθεν (7.4–5: "noble, if anyone is, among men illustrious on account of their descent") where the

31 Schmid and Stählin 1924, 983 n. 5 notice the parallelism of *Lith.* 94 περίφρονι Θειοδάμαντι = Quint. Smyr. *Posthom.* 1.292.

32 Vian 1986, 163.

scholia explain the gloss χαῶν as τῶν ἀγαθῶν.[33] The joy of the gods for such offerings in the *Lithica* is a mystic concept, but can as well be paralleled with the joy of Demeter when receiving the offering of the poet at the coda of the *Thalysia* (a passage that could be read from a mystic perspective) 7.156–157 ἁ δὲ γελάσσαι / δράγματα καὶ μάκωνας ἐν ἀμφοτέραισιν ἔχοισα ("while she [i.e. Demeter] smiles on us with favor, holding sheaves and poppies in her hands").

In the *Lithica* the cow led for sacrifice is young and carefully chosen: *Lith.* 155–156 αὐτὸς ἐγὼν ἀγέληθεν ἐλάσσας πίονα μόσχον / εἰαρινόν, θαλέθοντα νεήνιδος οὔθατι μητρός ("I myself chose from the herd a fatted calf, the firstling of the spring still growing under the udder of his young mother"). This is to honor god Helios and conforms with tradition.[34] The very scene of a man escorting a cow is literally bucolic and can acquire an air of religiosity. In certain contexts it prepares for a meeting with some divine creature. According to the Mnesiepes inscription (*SEG* 15.517 = Archilochus T 4 Gerber, of the third century BC), part of a monument set up in the Archilochus precinct in Paros, young Archilochus is sent by his father Telesicles into the fields (24 εἰς ἀγρόν), to a place called Λειμῶνες "Meadows" to fetch a cow for sale: ἀναστάντα πρωίτερον τῆς νυκτός, σελήνης λαμπούσης, / [ἄ]γειν τὴμ βοῦν εἰς πόλιν ("he got up before the end of the night, while the moon was shining, and was bringing the cow to town").[35] On the way he met a group of women, who, he thought, were returning from their work in the countryside to the town (29–30 ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων ἀπιέναι / αὐτὰς εἰς πόλιν). As it will turn out, Archilochus has just met the Muses. The cow plays an instrumental role in the story as the Muses appear to be interested in buying the cow but suddenly they and the cow disappear leaving behind a lyre. Archilochus is thus initiated into poetry and another cow-boy is turned into a divinely inspired poet. The inscription informs the reader that the story is ancient, its origins lost in time (20–21 τάδε παραδέδοταί τε ἡμῖν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρχαίων). It seems to be like that, since a pyxis from Eretria dated to 460–450 BC,[36] formerly associated with Hesiod (the "Hesiod Painter") but now believed to portray the Archilochus tradition, features a poet with a lyre sitting on a stool whereas on the other side a youth leads a cow. Muses surround both male figures. Recent studies point

33 Schol. Theoc. 7.5–9a, b, 78.13 and 78.19 Wendel.

34 Cf. *Il.* 10.292–293 = *Od.* 3.382–383 βοῦν ἦνιν εὐρυμέτωπον / ἀδμήτην, ἣν οὔπω ὑπὸ ζυγὸν ἤγαγεν ἀνήρ, see Orth, *RE* IIIA2 (1929), 2508 s.v. Stier.

35 Translation by Gerber 1999.

36 Caskey and Beazley 1931, no. 037. On the Mnesiepes inscription, see Clay 2004, 10–24, 104–110; Ornaghi 2009.

out the association of the cow with poetry, a concept that can be considered as inherently present in bucolic poetry (βουκολικὴ ἀοιδά).[37]

The narrator of the *Lithica* makes no secret of the bucolic associations of his family: his salvation comes from two dogs who tend his father's flocks (142 f.), he runs away "mingling with the sheep … hiding amidst the kids" (149–150 μήλοισι μιγεὶς … / … μέσσοισιν ἐνὶ πτήξας ἐρίφοισιν), and now he visits Helios' altar, as his father used to do, after "choosing from the herd a fatted calf, the firstling of the spring still growing under the udder of his young mother" (155–156), which construes a typically bucolic image. He now undergoes a kind of initiation into a secret knowledge.

Then the description of the scenery around the altar is uncannily in the debt of Theocritus, *Lith.* 159–164:

γλυκερὴ δὲ πέλει περὶ βωμὸν ἄνακτος
τερπωλὴ χλοερόν τε πέδον μαλακαί τ᾽ ἔπι ποῖαι
καὶ λασίαις πτελέῃσιν ὕπο σκιή· ἄγχι δ᾽ ἄρ αὐτῶν
ὕδωρ ἀέναον λισσῆς ὑπὸ πυθμένι πέτρης
λευκὸν ἀναβλύζον κελαρύζεται εἴκελον ᾠδῇ.
164 Ἴομεν· οὔτοι δαῖτα θεῶν θέμις ἀρνήσασθαι.

> around the altar of the god there is sweet joy, a verdant plain and a soft grass too, and shade under the shaggy elms. And near them an everflowing spring beneath a smooth rock gushing out translucent water babbles like a song. Let's go, it is certainly not right to slight a sacred banquet.

This is near the end of the second proem and the Theocritean features are drawn from near the end of the *Thalysia*. Significantly, the features adopted from Theocritus occur in the same order as they appear in the model. The promise of γλυκερὴ … τερπωλή at the sacred *locus* implies the sweet mystic joy after the successful conclusion of a theurgic rite and recalls the imagined reality in Theoc. 7.132–133 ἔν τε βαθείαις / *ἁδείας* σχοίνοιο χαμευνίσι ἐκλίνθημες / ἔν τε νεοτμάτοισι *γεγαθότες* οἰναρέοισι ("*happily* laid ourselves down on deep couches of *sweet* rush and newly cut vine leaves"). So is the verdant ground and the soft grass in the *Lithica* (160 μαλακαί τ᾽ ἔπι ποῖαι), a recollection of Pl. *Phdr.* 230c2 πάντων δὲ κομψότατον τὸ τῆς πόας, ὅτι … ἱκανὴ πέφυκε κατακλινέντι τὴν κεφαλὴν παγκάλως ἔχειν ("most delightful of all is the matter of the grass … thick enough

37 Svenbro 1999, 133–147; Giannisi 2004. Cf. esp. *Hom. Hy. Herm.* 437 πεντήκοντα βοῶν ἀντάξια ταῦτα μέμηδας "what you have contrived [the lyre] is worthy fifty cows."

to be just right to rest one's head upon"), 229b ἐκεῖ … ἐστιν … καὶ πόα καθίζεσθαι ἢ ἂν βουλώμεθα κατακλινῆναι ("there is … grass to sit on, or lie on, if we like"),[38] but in context mediated through Theocritus (cf. *Id.* 5.33–34 ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ τουτεὶ καταλείβεται· ὧδε πεφύκει / ποία, χἀ στιβὰς ἅδε, "here cool water drips down; here is grass, and a natural couch"). The thick shade of the elms is indebted to the very next verses of Theocritus: 7.135–136 πολλαὶ δ' ἄμμιν ὕπερθε κατὰ κρατὸς δονέοντο / αἴγειροι πτελέαι τε ("many a poplar and elm murmured above our heads") < 8–9 αἴγειροι πτελέαι τε εὔσκιον ἄλσος ὕφαινον / χλωροῖσιν πετάλοισι κατηρεφέες κομόωσαι ("poplars and elms wove a shady grove with their green foliage arching above"). Also the unceasing sonorous (163 ἀναβλύζον κελαρύζεται) water coming from within a rock and flowing close to the altar and the elms reproduces quite closely, verbally and notionally, the sacred water flowing from the cave of the nymphs in Theoc. 7.136–137 τὸ δ' ἐγγύθεν ἱερὸν ὕδωρ / Νυμφᾶν ἐξ ἄντροιο κατειβόμενον κελάρυζε ("trickling down from a cave of the nymphs, a sacred spring plashed nearby").[39] The harmony of the scene of nature implies the approval of the gods with respect to the proceedings that have taken place. Note that the sense of seclusion in the *Thalysia* locus is also maintained in the *Lithica* with the emphasis on ἀκρώρεια "mountain-top" as the final destination of the narrator (*Lith.* 104 με κιόντα πρὸς ἀγρῶν ἀκρώρειαν, 157, 773).

The identity of the protagonists in the *Lithica* is left unclear. Both the anonymous poet and Theiodamas are mysterious characters. Likewise in Theocritus 7 Simichidas and Lycidas are enigmatic characters, although in the scholiastic tradition Simichidas was solidly believed to be Theocritus himself.[40] This hazy pseudonymity is no doubt a deliberate choice on the part of the poet of the *Lithica*. Theiodamas bears a name plainly manifesting his association with theurgy: as the very word θεουργία means "the work of the gods" (i.e., the work effected by the gods)[41] so Θειοδάμας means "he who is possessed by the gods." Lycidas too bears a name suggesting his association with light and, perhaps, with Apollo.[42] Theiodamas is an exponent of revelation regarding the secret powers of stones, like Lycidas is an acknowledged master of the secrets of poetic composition (Theoc. 7.27–28 Λυκίδα φίλε, φαντί τυ πάντες / ἦμεν συρικτὰν μέγ' ὑπείροχον, "Lycidas my friend, everyone says that you are far and away

38 Translations of Plato's *Phaedrus* are by Rowe 1986.

39 As noted by Vian 1986, 164, *Lith.* 162 λισσῆς ὑπὸ πυθμένι πέτρης imitates Theoc. 22.37 εὗρον δ' ἀέναον κρήνην ὑπὸ λισσάδι πέτρῃ.

40 On Theiodamas, see the discussion in Halluex and Schamp 1985, 30–34. They contrast the practice of the poet elsewhere to mention patronymics when introducing characters. On the identity of Simichidas, see Spanoudakis 2011b.

41 For the controversy about the meaning of the word θεουργία, see Finamore 1999, 85.

42 For this identification of Lycidas, see Williams 1971 and Livrea 2004.

the most eminent piper") and has the authority to bestow his rustic stick as a confirmation of initiation (Theoc. 7.27–29, 43 τάν τοι, ἔφα, κορύναν δωρύττομαι, "I present you with this stick of mine" ~ 128–129). The theurgic perspective of such an act becomes manifest when one compares the prophetess of Apollo's oracle at Didyma filled by divine radiance by holding the staff of Apollo in Iambl. *De myst.* 95.9 Saffrey and Segonds καὶ μὴν ἥ γε ἐν Βραγχίδαις γυνὴ χρησμῳδὸς … ῥάβδον ἔχουσα τὴν πρώτως ὑπὸ θεοῦ τινος παραδοθεῖσαν πληροῦται τῆς θείας αὐγῆς ("and as for the woman at Branchidai who gives oracles … by holding the staff first given by a certain god is filled with divine radiance").[43]

Theiodamas professes to have obtained his secret knowledge from masters of old, from Philoctetes, himself attacked by a snake (*Lith.* 348–356) who in his turn inherited it from the Trojan seer Helenos. The pedigree of Theiodamas' mystic knowledge gives his art a hazy background, lost in time, and an orientalizing character. The poet knows Theiodamas (*Lith.* 93f.) and addresses him with ἑταῖρε (97), the very invocation with which Orpheus addresses Mousaios in the *Εὐχή* prefacing the collection of the *Orphic Hymns* (Εὐτυχῶς χρῶ, ἑταῖρε). The address suggests that the narrator is affiliated to the occult guild practicing theurgy, of which Theiodamas is a distinguished member. Simichidas addresses Lycidas Λυκίδα φίλε (7.91) and is reciprocated the address in 7.50 ὄρη, φίλος. It is plain that the two know each other and it comes out that they share common views about their art. The *Lithica* narrator asks Theiodamas to walk together with him (99–100 πρόφρων ἐπίνευσον / ἑσπέσθαι, "graciously consent to follow me") like Simichidas invites Lycidas to walk together with him for a poetic contest on their way (7.35–36 ἀλλ' ἄγε δή, ξυνὰ γὰρ ὁδὸς ξυνὰ δὲ καὶ ἀώς, / βουκολιασδώμεσθα, "but come, since we are traveling the same road at the same time, let's perform bucolic songs").

In theurgic rites, possession of space is important and it is effected in ways that exclude the feeling of touch: by sounds and smells. Both are intensively present at the final part of Theocritus 7. In the *Lithica* we are not merely dealing with a "literary" reception but a "magical" transformation of the Theocritean *locus*. Such a reception reveals the magical reading of the *Thalysia* on behalf of the theurgist poet.

43 Translation by J. Hershbell *apud* Clarke, Dillon, and Hershbell 2003.

3 The Orphic *Argonautica*

It is not known exactly when (end of the fifth century AD?) or where (Constantinople or Egypt) the so-called Orphic *Argonautica* were written. In the Orphic *Argonautica*, before the departure of the Argo the heroes are hosted by Chiron in his cave on Mt. Pelion. The episode belongs to the Argonautic tradition and the poet develops it in eighty-five verses, although in his main model, Apollonius of Rhodes, Chiron's presence at the departure scene is only briefly mentioned (*Arg.* 1.553–558).[44] The scenery is rustic and primitive (Orph. *Arg.* 402–405).[45] Chiron had been earlier described by Orpheus (Orph. *Arg.* 381–384) as a primitive revelation-figure: a righteous man who reveals his "teachings" through his music. Chiron is righteous in the *Iliad* too (11.382 δικαιότατος Κενταύρων) but in the Orphic *Argonautica* this quality of his acquires a less concrete and more mystic character.

The crowd of heroes demands Orpheus to compete with Chiron in song: Orph. *Arg.* 407–408 ὄφρ' ἂν ἔγωγε / δηρίσω Χείρωνι διωλύγιον κιθαρίζων ("so that I compete with Chiron with my far-sounding cithara").[46] Yet, Orpheus hesitates to compete with Chiron: Orph. *Arg.* 409–410 ἀλλ' ἐγὼ οὐ πιθόμην—περὶ γάρ μοι ἐπήλυθεν αἰδώς / ὁπλότερον γεγαῶτα γεραιτέρῳ ἰσοφαρίζειν ("but I did not want to listen to them—for, being younger, I was ashamed to rival an older man", < **Il.* 5.201, *al.* / ἀλλ' ἐγὼ οὐ πιθόμην) which resonates with Theoc. 7.38–40 ἐγὼ δέ τις οὐ ταχυπειθής / … οὐ γάρ πω κατ' ἐμὸν νόον οὔτε τὸν ἐσθλὸν Σικελίδαν νίκημι τὸν ἐκ Σάμω οὔτε Φιλίταν / ἀείδων ("not that I am quick to believe them … in my own opinion I am not yet a match in song for the great Sicelidas from Samos, or for Philitas"), 7.30–31 κατ' ἐμὸν νόον ἰσοφαρίζειν / ἔλπομαι ("in my own opinion I think I can rival you"). With the Orphic αἰδώς one may compare the scholiastic note to 7.38, 88.18 Wendel τοῦτό φησι ταπεινῶν ἑαυτόν ("he says this debasing himself"). *Ἰσοφαρίζειν is a term both passages share and Orpheus is younger than Chiron, as Simichidas is younger than Sicelidas (Asclepiades) and Philitas in Theocritus. Clearly, Orpheus has no feeling of inferiority; he just feels αἰδώς to shame an older man. Young Simichidas' declaration of inferiority in Theocritus is not genuine either, but only designed to bring about a poetic contest: 7.42 ὡς ἐφάμαν ἐπίταδες ("so I said on purpose"). Chiron's half-ox half-man appearance in a way recalls Lycidas' rustic appearance as a goatherd "wearing the tawny skin of a thick-haired, shaggy goat smelling of fresh rennet" (Theoc.

44 See Schelske 2011, 265.

45 Schelske 2011, 113–114, 267 describes Chiron's cave as "literary" (rather than "philosophical") and points out its affinities with Cyclops' cave in *Od.* 9.

46 Translations of the Orphic *Argonautica* are by Covalito 2011, adapted.

7.15–16). Like Lycidas, Chiron is a cult-figure of reverence. All the contest of Chiron and Orpheus is about a song (Orph. *Arg.* 412 ἐριδαινέμεν εἵνεκα μολπῆς), like the contest of Simichidas and Lycidas (Theoc. 7.35–36 ἀλλ᾽ ἄγε δὴ ... βουκολιασδώμεσθα, 49 ἄλλ᾽ ἄγε βουκολικᾶς ταχέως ἀρξώμεθ᾽ ἀοιδᾶς "[b]ut come, let's begin our bucolic songs at once").

After the songs, Chiron gives Orpheus a Dionysiac token: Orph. *Arg.* 448–449 αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ Κένταυρος ἑῇ γέρας ὤπασε χειρί / νεβρῆν παρδαλέην, ξεινήιον ὄφρα φέροιμι ("moreover, the Centaur gave me a leopard skin from his hand, to bear away as a gift"), like Lycidas gives Simichidas his staff as a token: Theoc. 7.128–129 ὃ δέ μοι τὸ λαγωβόλον, ἁδὺ γελάσσας / ὡς πάρος, ἐκ Μοισᾶν ξεινήιον ὤπασεν ἦμεν ("Lycidas laughed aloud as before and gave me his stick as a gift from the Muses"). The motif ultimately derives from Hesiod but the rounding off of the narrative, the context and the verbal echoes suggest that it is Theocritus that the poet has in mind. In the actual songs Chiron sings of the battle of the Lapiths against Heracles at Pholoe after drinking wine, 417–418 ἠδ᾽ ὡς Ἡρακλῆι ... / ἐν Φολόῃ δήρισαν, ἐπεὶ μένος οἶνος ἔγειρεν ("and how they fought against Heracles on Pholoe when wine rouse their spirits"), an episode mentioned at the end of the *Thalysia*: Theoc. 7.149–150 ἆρά γέ πᾳ τοιόνδε Φόλω κατὰ λάινον ἄντρον / κρατῆρ᾽ Ἡρακλῆ γέρων ἐστάσατο Χείρων; ("could it have been a bowl like this that the old Chiron provided for Heracles in Pholus' rocky cave?"). Orpheus, on the other hand, suitably sings a cosmogonic song (Orph. *Arg.* 419–441, as he does in Apoll. Rhod. *Arg.* 1.496–511) which implies the superiority of theological poetry against the traditional epic poetry singing of heroic myths. This recalls, *mutatis mutandis*, the distinction between pastoral song and theological poetry, in favor of the later, in Hesiod's initiation in the third/fourth century ethopoea discussed above (pp. 401–402). No doubt the poet-theologian felt a feeling of superiority in being able to "unlock" poems of the past in this light and to recreate, or even surpass them with his own poetry.

As a follow up, a few lines below, while the Argonauts set sail and leave Mt. Pelion behind there appears Sciathos and the tomb of Dolops, a brother of Chiron: Orph. *Arg.* 461 φάνθη δὲ Σκίαθος Δολοπός τ᾽ ἀνεφαίνετο σῆμα ("Sciathos appeared and the tomb of Dolops came into sight"). The line reproduces Apoll. Rhod. *Arg.* 1.583/5 φαίνετο δ᾽ εἰναλίη Σκίαθος ... / ... καὶ τύμβος Δολοπήιος ("Sciathos appeared in the sea ... and the tomb of Dolops"), but involves a verbal echo from Theocritus, since the poet remembers the tomb of Brasilas as a marker for the wayfarers on Cos: Theoc. 7.10–11 κοὔπω τὰν μεσάταν ὁδὸν ἄνυμες, οὐδὲ τὸ σᾶμα / ἁμῖν τὸ Βρασίλα κατεφαίνετο ("we had not yet reached the midpoint of our journey, and the tomb of Brasilas had not come in sight").

4 Conclusion

Why would Theocritus appeal to "mystic" poets such as those discussed in this chapter? Lacking some explicit reference, we can make only assumptions. Theocritus' construction of a surreal world, inhabited by anonymous or conventional characters, undefined by place and time, could be considered as a "buffer-zone" between the world of senses and the realm of the intellect. The interaction of man and nature could certainly be considered part of the world's coherence. Also the uniqueness of Theocritus' poetry would be attractive to explorers of exquisite areas of literature. The poems themselves, ambiguous and enigmatic as they are, would offer details that would be liable to "intellectual" readings. Champion among these poems would be *Idyll* 1 and especially *Idyll* 7, describing the initiation of a young talented poet into the art of the "new" composition by an acknowledged master. The exchange of songs could be seen as a process of initiation between two souls struggling to achieve a greater degree of competence into a secret art. The *loca* surrounding the poem provide a mystic seclusion. The final arrival to an idealized destination would represent a full-scale mystic consummation. Such a reception is not irrelevant to the evolution of pastoral in later times. Pastoral would be seen as construing an "other-worldly reality" or an idealized space in which spiritual quests could take place. Nor is the evolution of pastoral unconnected to the pervasiveness of philosophical thought favoring a "spiritual" reading of poetry. This has been thoroughly studied for Homer. It is not much different for Theocritus.

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CHAPTER 21

Sites and Cities in Late Antique Literature: Athens, Berytus, and Cultural Self-Identification in the *Dionysiaca* of Nonnus of Panopolis

Nicole Kröll

> Topographies are techniques of space through which cultures are embodied, defined and stabilized …
>
> HARTMUT BÖHME, *Topographien der Literatur*[1]

∴

1 Introduction

In the ancient world, topographies, landscapes, and localities are closely connected with myth.[2] Myth plays a vital function within a sociocultural unit; it connects members of a society with familiar places, while helping to construct and establish their identity. Particularly in the last few years, literary studies show an increasing interest in applying cultural theories when dealing with textual analysis. Scholars have drawn attention to narrations and narrative units, to their conceptions of time and space, as well as to their relationship with the cultural environment of the author and contemporary readers.[3] This kind of approach has been established within the field of classics and has also gained support in Nonnian studies.[4]

1 Böhme 2005, XXI "Topographien sind Raumtechniken, durch die sich Kulturen verkörpern, abgrenzen, stabilisieren …"

2 A slightly different version of this chapter has been published under the title "Literarische Orte in den *Dionysiaka* des Nonnos von Panopolis"; see Kröll 2016a.

3 See, e.g., Dennerlein 2009; Erll 2005; Günzel and Kümmerling 2012; Pethes 2008; Schmitz 2002.

4 See, e.g., Purves 2010; Thalmann 2011; de Jong 2012; Gilhuly and Worman 2014. On the literary concepts of geography and topography in Nonnus' works: Chuvin 1991; Hadjittofi 2011; Kröll 2016b, 20–23; 2016a.

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Let us take this as a point of departure for the following considerations. A main focus of recent research in the study of Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* has been the question of the link to contemporary society—the Hellenic peoples of the fifth century Eastern Mediterranean—who not only collected, absorbed, and reproduced literary traditions of previous Greek culture, but also reprocessed, converted, and adapted the lexis, themes, and myths according to the principles of Late Antique poetics. These Hellenes obtained their full "encyclopedic" education in regional and supra-regional urban centers such as Panopolis and Alexandria in Egypt, Antioch, or Berytus.[5] Together with the far-reaching political changes in Late Antiquity there was a cultural shift from the West to the East. Nonetheless, the literary, rhetorical, and mythical traditions of the Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic periods were preserved through a highly conservative educational program and were revivified and further developed by the "new" religious phenomenon of Christianity.

The Greeks of Late Antiquity were able to adapt the cultural heritage of the past in order to fit it into their own contemporary context, and they provided a relationship between well-established mythical *topoi* and newly invented narrations. Greek literati, resident in the cities of the Eastern Mediterranean, recollected Greek culture of the Classical period by reflecting literary themes and contextualizing these familiar patterns with places that were already of high cultural relevance in the times of Classical Greece. Athens was one of these centers that represented Classical erudition and learned culture.

Therefore, we can suppose that these cultural trends should also be visible in the *Dionysiaca*, notably in the various city images Nonnus designs within his forty-eight-book epic. I will take the cities of Athens and Berytus as examples to highlight the interplay between mythic and literary tradition as well as cultural realities of the author's time.

2 Greece and Athens in the *Dionysiaca*

The epic of the *Dionysiaca* covers an enormous time span reaching from the events before the birth of Dionysus up to his apotheosis. Within this chronological time frame, Nonnus discloses likewise a comprehensive and all-embracing concept of literary space that starts with Phoenicia, the homeland of Cadmus, grandfather of Dionysus, and ends in the vague Olympic realm. The geographical setting is further expanded by Cadmus' move to Greece where he estab-

5 Hernández de la Fuente 2008; Miguélez-Cavero 2008; Shorrock 2011.

lishes himself as a city founder in Thebes; and thereafter by Dionysus himself who leads his Bacchic companions as far as India to spread his cult of the grapevine. The geographical spectrum that makes up the Eastern world of the epic lacks explicit indications of space and time, and thus creates a sense of space without limitations; a literary landscape that is expansible at will and that guides the reader through the meanderings of Nonnian narration. This bird's-eye view and macroscopic perspective is filled with multiple topographical details: landscapes, landmarks, and locations that are—like the city images—built up as narrative settings.

One of these specific landscapes in the *Dionysiaca* is that of Greece, and due to its numerous connections to ancient myth, a closer interpretation of this landscape seems justified.[6] For the poet of the *Dionysiaca*, Greece, *Hellas*, is presented as the "mother of romances"—μυθοτόκον πλέον Ἑλλάδα[7]—and is closely connected with Dionysus: "Son of Zeus, that is a fairytale of the Hellenes" (Διὸς δέ μιν Ἑλλάδι φήμῃ / ἔμμεναι ἔπλασε μῦθος).[8] In both cases, the word μῦθος serves as a rhetorical argument uttered by two of Dionysus' opponents: Typhon mocking Zeus in book 1; and Iris in book 20 who, disguised as Ares, addresses Lycurgus and spurs him to fight against Dionysus. The word therefore carries a powerful negative connotation. On the other hand, we also find some statements that are more neutral: Dionysus, like his father Zeus, is qualified as the master of the "fruitbearing rain" with which he "irrigate(s) all the productive orchards of Hellas."[9] Also, the denomination of the inhabitants of Greece as "Panhellenes" or "All-Hellenes" implies the conception of the *Hellenes* as a cultural entity.[10]

The picture that is created in the *Dionysiaca* concerning Greece and the Greeks or Hellenes so far seems to rely closely on mythical and historical tradition, regardless of the rhetorical usage in the particular passage in the text. *Hellas* appears as a "container" for manifold cultural traditions of the Greek past; there seems to be little evidence for contemporary influences. This impression remains when Greece becomes not only a place of distant cultural memory but also the setting of the narration. The narrator is clinging to an almost nostalgic

6 Cf. Chuvin 1991, 47–53 and 314 who argues that Attica and its myths serve to locate the Dionysian cult in "Classical" Greece.

7 *Dion.* 1.385. The Greek text of the *Dionysiaca* follows Vian et al. 1976–2006, the English translation is taken from Rouse 1940.

8 *Dion.* 20.207 f.

9 *Dion.* 22.278 f. Ὄμβρῳ μὲν γονόεσσαν ὅλην ἐδίηνας ἀλωὴν / Ἑλλάδος.

10 *Dion.* 4.252.

picture of the Greek capital: Athens remains a "Classical" Athens that is well known to the reader through myth and history.

The narrator sketches a topo-geographical picture of Attica and Athens when Dionysus enters Greece and its capital at the beginning of books 44 and 47.[11] After his victorious return from India and the Near East, the god approaches Greece from the north: Illyria, mount Pelion, the Boeotian river Asopos and the cities of Tanagra and Thebes delimit Attica to the north.[12] This move toward the West is expressed through the solemn entering of the god into Athens and the implementation of the Dionysiac cult.

In the elaborated narration of the festivities, there are embedded distinctive toponyms that define the narrative setting as the city of Athens: the two Athenian rivers, Ilissos and Kephisos, are the stomping grounds for the wine god's new followers.[13] The topographical outline of Athens and Attica is supplemented by other passages in the poem, which name the Hymettus (a mountain range next to Athens), the port of Phaleron, and the cities of Marathon, Eleusis, Brauron, Thorikos, Aphidnai, and Acharnai.[14]

The reduction of the narrative space to selective topographical checkpoints is realized for Athens and Attica in a very consistent way; thus, it is not the objective of the narrative to deliver a description of this area with cartographical correctness. Rather, a comprehensive tableau is created by the knowing reader who is able to decode, thanks to his education and cultural memory, the geographical information and complete it with his knowledge of mythology.

The city of Athens, as portrayed in the *Dionysiaca*, is a mythical and timeless Athens that consists of mythological commonplaces known to readers in Late Antiquity. The lack of contemporary subject matter, as far as Athens is concerned, recreates the Hellenic metropolis as it was at the peak of its cultural identification with Eastern Mediterranean Hellenism.

Not only is the topography of Athens absorbed into the *Dionysiaca*, but also its institutions, history, and myth: for example, the Attic festival for Dionysus Limnaios, the battle of Marathon, the city of Sparta, and the Panhellenic games are all seen in the poem.[15] Elements of Greek culture are made visible through

11 *Dion.* 44.1–14; 47.1–34.

12 The demarcation of Attica is further carried out by the naming of other Greek regions visited by Dionysus: Naxos (*Dion.* 47.265–471), Argos (47.472–741), Thrace and Phrygia (48).

13 *Dion.* 47.13 and 15; see also 39.190; 41.223; 47.79, 82 and 262.

14 See *Dion.* 13.180–200, esp. 13.183 Ὑμήττοιο μελισσήεντας; 13.198 ἐσσυμένων δ᾽ ἐς ἄρηα λιμὴν ἤχησε Φαληρεύς.

15 Dionysus Limnaios: *Dion.* 27.306 f. οὐ μετὰ δὴν Φρύγα ῥυθμὸν ἀνακρούσουσιν Ἀθῆναι / Λιμναῖον μετὰ Βάκχον Ἐλευθερίῳ Διονύσῳ; Marathon: 27.299 f. ῥύεο τὸν μετόπισθε βοηθόον Ἀτθίδι χάρμῃ, / Μηδοφόνον ῥυτῆρα τιναςσομένου Μαραθῶνος; Sparta: 31.261 f. ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὴ / Σπάρ-

anachronistic events, and historical and mythical implicitness becomes a literary *topos* within the Nonnian narrative *kosmos*.

The special relation of Late Antiquity to "Hellenism" or "Greekness" becomes evident through mythical characters inserted in the Nonnian epic that are closely connected with Athens. One prominent character is Erechtheus, the ancestral king of Athens and quasi-prototype of all Athenian citizens, who in the *Dionysiaca* appears as a military leader among Dionysus' troops. Erechtheus is named as ἀστὸν Ἀθήνης in *Dion.* 37.657 and associated with Athens also via a constructed genealogy going back to the homonymous Erechtheus (also known as Erechthonios).[16] A subtle allusion to this original Athenian myth can also be found in the speech this younger Erechtheus delivers within the setting of the chariot race in *Dion.* 37.230–235: there he utters a prayer to his personal guardian goddess Athena in order to request her help in overcoming his competitors in the race. Here, Erechtheus refers to the renowned contest between Athena and Poseidon for the city-patronage of Athens that was won by Athena who prevailed over Poseidon by endowing the olive plant to the Athenians.

By means of integrating Greek myth into the *Dionysiaca*, Nonnus integrates his protagonist Dionysus into the mythical and literary tradition. Furthermore, the poet links Erechtheus/Erechthonios with Dionysus in redoubling their mythical fate: Dionysus is brought up parentless by different nurses, like Erechtheus by Athena. Erechtheus' rise from a motherless child to the Athenian king reflects Dionysus' ascent to the Olympian realms and his function as a new representative of Greek religious beliefs; thus, the recollection of this primordial Athenian myth at this point of the narrative authenticates the true Greek origin of the Dionysian myth in the Nonnian epic.

In addition to Erechtheus, Kekrops, the first Athenian king, also serves as a mythical authority for Nonnus. According to the traditional myth, he was a judge in the contest of Athena and Poseidon over the city-patronage of

της σῆς ἐπίβηθι, καὶ εὐθώρηκα δεχέσθω / χαλκείῳ σὺν Ἄρηι χολωομένην Ἀφροδίτην; Panhellenic games: 37.136–153 εἰ γὰρ ἀπὸ Τμώλοιο γένος λάχε Λύδιος ἀνήρ, / ἱππείης τελέσει Πελοπηΐδος ἄξια νίκης· / εἰ δὲ πέδον Πισαῖον ἔχει μαιήιον ἵππων / Ἤλιδος εὐδίφροιο καὶ Οἰνομάοιο πολίτης, / οἶδεν Ὀλυμπιάδος κοτινηφόρον ὄζον ἐλαίης· / ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ Οἰνομάοιο πέλει δρόμος, οὐδ᾽ ἐλατῆρες / ἐνθάδε κέντρον ἔχουσι κακοξείνων ὑμεναίων, / ἀλλ᾽ ἀρετῆς δρόμος οὗτος, ἐλεύθερος ἀφρογενείης· / εἰ γένος Ἀονίης ἢ Φωκίδος αἷμα κομίζει, / Πύθιον Ἀπόλλωνι τετιμένον οἶδεν ἀγῶνα· / εἰ μεθέπει σοφὸν οὖδας ἐλαιοκόμου Μαραθῶνος, / ἔγνω πιαλέης ἐγκύμονα κάλπιν ἐέρσης· / εἰ πέλεν εὐώδινος Ἀχαιίδος ἀστὸς ἀρούρης, / Πελλήνην δεδάηκεν, ὅπῃ ῥιγηλὸν ἀγῶνα / ἄνδρες ἀεθλεύουσι φιλοχλαίνου περὶ νίκης, / χειμερίῳ σφίγγοντες ἀθαλπέα γυῖα χιτῶνι· / εἰ ναέτης βλάστησεν ἁλιζώνοιο Κορίνθου, / Ἴσθμιον ἡμετέροιο Παλαίμονος οἶδεν ἀγῶνα.

16 For Erechtheus in the *Dionysiaca* see also 13.171–181; 19.80–99; 37.154–161, 621–666; 39.171–214.

Athens.[17] Moreover, the Athenians are named "Kekropides," "descendants of Kekrops," in *Dion.* 13.171,[18] and Athens is entitled "city of Kekrops,"[19] while Athena receives the byname "Kekropia."[20]

The connections between Dionysus and the representatives of mythical Athens illustrate the change of perspective that the Hellenes of the Eastern Mediterranean underwent in Late Antiquity: Erechtheus and his Athenian army join the Dionysian army in order to fight against the peoples in the Far East; old Athens and the "Classical Hellenic world" support Dionysus, the cult-bearer from Asia Minor, and are subordinated to his command. In return, the wine god supplies the Western hemisphere with his cultural product of the grapevine, which, after his victorious return from India, he distributes in Greece. There can be seen a mutual exercise of influence but with a clear priority of the "Eastern cult" of Dionysus over his cultural home country of Greece. It is primarily due to the wine god that Greek culture is expanded eastwards and that Athens receives its full cultural profile.

This has a considerable significance for the sociocultural environment of the Nonnian epic: the image of Athens, as conveyed in the *Dionysiaca*, is viewed explicitly via the perspective of the eastern Hellenes. The actual cultural bearer of Greek tradition is not the old Athens nor its mythical kings, but the Hellenic Near East, which identifies itself with the historical and mythical past as well as with its own contemporary cultural realities.

3 Berytus as the New Athens

This transfer of traditional norms into a new sociocultural environment becomes evident in the image of the city of Berytus.[21] Nonnus links this Late Antique center of *Romanitas* and Greekness to one of his own myths, which recounts the story of Beroe, daughter of Aphrodite and Adonis, in book 41.[22] The outstanding importance of Berytus as center of Roman and Late Antique law is highlighted through the birth of Beroe in the presence of several other mythical and historical characters: Hermes, the messenger-god, Themis and

17 See *Dion.* 13.151 etc.
18 Κεκροπίδας δ' ἐκόρυσσε μόθων ἀκόρητος Ἐρεχθεύς.
19 *Dion.* 47.410.
20 See *Dion.* 39.188 μνώεο Κεκροπίης εὐπαρθένου; 47.322 Κεκροπίην ἐνόησα.
21 For Berytus as city of law and rhetoric, cf., e.g., Cribiore 2007, 54, 57. For Berytus and the Beroe-myth in the *Dionysiaca*, see Chuvin 1991, 196–221; Bajoni 2003; Hernández de la Fuente 2008, 109–116.
22 *Dion.* 41.155–184.

Dike, the goddesses of law and legal affairs, and Aion, the personification of the eternal elapse of time, all serve as midwives. The function of Berytus as one of the leading centers in the field of higher education in Late Antiquity is interwoven with Nonnian myth. The transfer of educational and cultural traditions from Hellas to Berytus in the Greek Near East is achieved through the presentation of three objects in the narrative: (1) a document in Latin language, which Hermes holds in his hands as a symbol for the leading position of Berytus in the field of law;[23] (2) the tablets of Solon's laws, emblem for the legal constitution of Classical Athens, over which little Beroe is born;[24] and (3) the garments of Dike which Aion uses as diapers for the newborn child.[25] Young Beroe is now equipped with the sacrosanct writings of antique legal knowledge and is supported by the patronage of the relevant deities.[26]

4 Subjects of Debate

For the creation of the Beroe myth and the illustration of the well-known legal institution, Nonnus harks back to mytho-historical commonplaces. Both the author and the readers are members of the learned elite who saw it as their obligation to preserve the knowledge of Greek antiquity regardless of their own confessional convictions. In his presentation of Athens as cultural foundation of Late Antique "Greekness," Nonnus is neither content with mere praise of the past nor aims to reflect this past in an exact or coherent way. Rather, by depicting Berytus as the New Athens, he transfers Greece to the East and claims the Eastern Mediterranean to be the motherland of Greek culture. The fact that the myth of Beroe is set in a chronologically unspecified mythical past increases the value of Berytus vis-à-vis Athens and implies the cultural supremacy of the actual new cultural center over the old Hellenic metropolis.

What general conclusions concerning literary and cultural theories can be drawn? First of all, an author can rewrite the past anew—"reorganize" and "reconstruct" it, to use the terminology of Maurice Halbwachs.[27] In the so-called transitional period of Late Antiquity, there can be generated "a (literary)

23 *Dion.* 41.160 Λατινίδα δέλτον ἀείρων.

24 *Dion.* 41.165 θεσμὰ Σόλωνος ἔχουσα; 167 f. καὶ Ἀτθίδος ὑψόθι βίβλου / παῖδα σοφὴν ἐλόχευσε.

25 *Dion.* 41.179 σπάργανα πέπλα Δίκης ἀνεκούφισε σύντροφος Αἰών.

26 For his myth of Beroe, Nonnus also readapts the story of the contest between Athena and Poseidon over the city-patronage of Athens. Poseidon and Dionysus, Beroe's suitors, stage a contest over the patronage of Berytus which results in a voluntary surrender of Dionysus, who yields all his privileges and Beroe to Poseidon, the patron of the new city.

27 See Halbwachs 1941.

work of a completely new type … which persists autonomously regardless of its commemorative community and is the starting point for creating new subjects of remembrance."[28] Second, an author can manifest the past in "topologies of knowledge and memory";[29] that is to say, by using specific information that is closely linked to localities and works through the application of "recurrent spatial codes."[30] The narrative categories of time and space are interdependent.[31] And, third, the readers can be regarded as a "commemorative community" as defined by Pierre Nora: an associated group with a shared cultural foundation that, by means of literary articulation, cultivates a collective commemoration.[32]

The *Dionysiaca* provides evidence of not just a retrospective concern with so-called "Classical Antiquity," but evidence likewise of fundamental cultural shifts and upheavals that took place in the Late Antique Eastern Mediterranean. The Hellenes perceived themselves as a cultural community and relied on ancient cultural knowledge that, although of pagan origin, was not necessarily rejected by their Christian belief system, and was ready for literary utilization.

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28 Assmann 1997, 275: "ein Werk völlig neuen Typs …, das nun unabhängig von der tragenden Erinnerungsgemeinschaft bestehen und zum Ausgangspunkt einer neuen Erinnerung werden kann"; see also Fitter 1995, 9: "No landscape can ever thus be 'autotelic'—bearing a perennial and 'objective' appearance and significance independent of its 'reader': cultural projection by a landscape's beholder will complete its necessarily partial 'self-formulation'."

29 Mülder-Bach 2005, 404: "Topologien des Wissens und Gedächtnisses."

30 Mülder-Bach 2005, 404: "wiederkehrende räumliche Codes." On the cultural memory, see Halbwachs 1941, 158: "Mais une vérité, pour se fixer dans la mémoire d' un groupe, doit se presenter sous la forme concrete d' un événement, d' une figure personnelle, ou d' un lieu."

31 See Böhme 2005, XXI: "Die Elementarität von Raum- und Zeitzuordnungen führt dazu, daß sie sich gegenseitig durchdringen. Zeitordnungen kommen nicht ohne Verräumlichungen aus, Raumordnungen sind immer auch historisch-temporalisierend."

32 See Nora 1984–1992; Assmann 1997, 30; Müller-Funk 2008, 7 f., 99.

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PART 5

Reception of Nonnus

CHAPTER 22

An Unknown "Nonnian" Poet: John of Memphis

Enrico Magnelli

Among the many distinguished Polish Hellenists who studied with, or were in some way influenced by, the great Leon Sternbach during the first decades of the twentieth century,[1] one should not forget Jan Sajdak, whose work on Late Antique and Byzantine poetry still deserves our closest attention.[2] His monograph on the Greek commentators of Gregory of Nazianzus is an invaluable tool for scholars working on the Cappadocian Fathers.[3] I must confess that my own interests, focusing much more on postclassical poetry than on patristics, led me to pay special attention to the final part of that book, i.e. the catalog of the *Laudatores Gregorii Nazianzeni*, some fifty pages in which Sajdak, with admirable competence, gathered a great number of Greek and Latin texts—from Late Antiquity, the Middle Ages, even the sixteenth century—praising Gregory and his literary output.[4] Some of those texts are well known, and

1 Born in 1864, Sternbach studied classics in Leipzig, Dresden, and Vienna between 1882 and 1885; in 1891 he became professor at the Jagellonian University of Kraków, and quickly gained a European reputation with his pivotal studies on Greek literature, both postclassical (the *Appendix Barberino-Vaticana*, the Aesopic tradition, the *Gnomologium Vaticanum*) and Byzantine (George of Pisidia, Photius, John Geometres, Psellus, Kallikles, Theodore Prodromus, Constantine Manasses, Eugene of Palermo). His *Meletemata Graeca* (Sternbach 1886) are a mine of sound erudition and intelligent remarks. He was imprisoned by the Nazis during the infamous Sonderaktion Krakau in 1939, and murdered in 1940 in the concentration camp of Sachsenhausen. On him, see Hammer 1940–1946; Mossay 1970; Plezia 1992 sheds much light on his work toward a critical text of Gregory of Nazianzus' vast poetic corpus—given the admirable standards of Sternbach's published editions of Greek poetry, we can only regret that such a project remained unfulfilled. The classical scholar should not be confused with his more famous nephew, Leo Henryk Sternbach (1908–2005), illustrious chemist and inventor of Valium.

2 Sajdak (1882–1967) graduated at Kraków, then taught at the universities of Lwów (Leopolis) and Poznań. On his career and scholarly output, see Steffen 2000. It is a pity that some publications of his are so hard to find in academic libraries, and still lacking on either Google Books or Internet Archive. His edition of John Geometres' hymns to the Virgin Mary (Sajdak 1931; to be read with Paul Maas' 1931 detailed review) is still the standard text of those widely ignored, yet very interesting poems: let me express my gratitude to my friends Jerzy Danielewicz and Krystyna Bartol (Poznań) for providing me with a photocopy of it.

3 Sajdak 1914.

4 Sajdak 1914, 248–295 and 306–307. Lefherz 1958, 98–101 offers a number of corrections and additions.

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have been recently republished, or published in full, in updated critical editions:[5] but many more still require a good deal of scholarly work. Venturing into this almost untrodden field, I chanced upon a neglected poem by an equally neglected author. A Nonnian author, as we will see.

Oxford, Magdalen College, gr. 5 is a parchment manuscript of 365 folios dating from the tenth/eleventh century,[6] containing thirty orations by Gregory of Nazianzus, i.e. the sixteen so-called "liturgical" ones (1, 11, 14, 15, 16, 19, 21, 24, 38–45, according to the modern numbering system)[7] and fourteen more (4, 5, 6, 20, 22, 23, 26–31, 33, 36), with various kinds of scholia.[8] Near the end of the book, f. 364^{v}, there is a short Greek poem in eighteen hexameters *On a book containing the 47 orations of the Theologian*, ascribed to one John of Memphis.[9] Needless

5 Theodore Prodromus' collection of four-verse epigrams on the life of Gregory (Sajdak 1914, 259–265) are re-edited with commentary by D'Ambrosi 2008 (some additions in Magnelli 2010, 123–144); a new critical text of his poem in twelve elegiac couplets (Sajdak 1914, 258–259) is announced (see Zagklas 2016, 226–229). The encomium of Gregory by Nicetas the Paphlagonian (Sajdak 1914, 248–249) can be read in the critical edition of Rizzo 1976; his biography by Gregory the Presbyter (Sajdak 1914, 255) in that of Lequeux 2001. Theodore Metochites' long poem on Gregory, Basil the Great and John Chrysostomus, of which Sajdak (1914, 280) just offered *incipit* and *explicit*, eventually had its *editio princeps* in Polemis 2015, 115–138. Several book epigrams in praise of Gregory (Sajdak 1914, 270–274) are edited or re-edited in Somers 1999; Macé and Somers 2000; Demoen and Somers 2016.

6 Eleventh century according to Coxe 1852, 3; followed by Sajdak 1914, 268. Tenth/eleventh according to Mossay 1987, 95; followed by both Nimmo Smith 2000, 78–79 and Somers 2002, 107. Sosower and Wilson 2016, 15–17 rather date it to the tenth century (so does Francesco Valerio, *per litt.*, who would tentatively place it in the second half), remarking that "folios 1, 2 and 8 are substitute leaves of c. 1300; folio 192 is a substitute leaf of the 11th century," and that "on 365r there are miscellaneous notes on religious matters, probably 15th century. On 365v there are more jottings."

7 Those edited for the first time by Musurus in 1516 (see Bertolini 1988; Mathieu 2008).

8 On the manuscript, see Coxe 1852, 3–4; Norden 1872, 610–611; Mossay 1987, 95–96, with further bibliography; Somers 2002, 109–110 with n. 40; Nimmo Smith 2010, 135–136 with n. 2; Sosower and Wilson 2016, 2 and 15–17. It is marked L.017 in the database of the Centre d'Études sur Grégoire de Nazianze (http://nazianzos.fltr.ucl.ac.be); digital images of very good quality are available on the Bodleian Library website (http://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/inquire/p/9b630a33-ecb7-4af6-a4c2-a0d687f3cf48). Since it does not contain the full *corpus* of Gregory's orations, it is not analyzed in the detailed monograph by Somers 1997 (with additions in Somers 2004).

9 According to Sajdak 1914, 268 the epigram, written in red ink, *manu posteriore videtur esse scriptum*. No mention of this in the careful description provided by Sosower and Wilson 2016, 15–17. In case the hand really were a different one, it would not be much later, as far as I can judge. But Rachele Ricceri (*per litt.*) argues on good grounds that the epigram was written by the main scribe; so does Francesco Valerio (whose detailed paleographical analysis of this manuscript is hoped to appear very soon), highlighting its affinities with the copious *marginalia* added to the text of Gregory's orations.

to say, this is not a book epigram written for the Oxford manuscript, which does not preserve forty-seven orations:[10] it was added there by a scribe who found it somewhere else and, obsessed with typical *horror vacui*, copied it to fill the *verso* of the last folio containing Gregory's prose.[11] The verses—with the disgraceful omission of line 8—were printed at the beginning of the seventeenth century by Richard Montagu in the very last page of his edition of Gregory's orations against Julian; Sajdak, some three centuries later, was able to offer a much improved text; a few years ago, Jennifer Nimmo Smith briefly quoted lines 1–6 alone;[12] and now the poem has been included in the rich *Database of Byzantine Book Epigrams* of the University of Ghent,[13] where line 8 has been deservedly restored to the text. That is all. No scholar, as far as I know, ever dealt with its language, style, meter, or chronology; the poem is absent from the online *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, and its first line does not appear in either Vassis' monumental *Initia carminum Byzantinorum* or its *Supplementum*.[14] Only in the *Lexikon zur byzantinischen Gräzität* do we find some traces of it.[15] Yet when I first read it I realized that there was something familiar in its poetic diction, and decided to spend some time with it. Here I offer a new critical text (based on a collation of both the manuscript and the editions by Montagu and Sajdak), an English translation, a quite detailed commentary, and a final assessment, in the hope to shed some light, if not on the author's identity, at least on his chronology and literary affiliations.

Ἰωάννου Μεμφίτου εἰς βίβλον τῶν μζʹ λόγων τοῦ Θεολόγου

Γρηγόριος μερόπεσσι θεηγόρος ἄνθεα μύθων
τεσσαράκοντα καὶ ἑπτὰ σοφαῖς βίβλοισι χαράξας
αἱρετικῆς ἀπέκερσε θεημάχον αἶσχος Ἐνυοῦς,
δήμιον αὐδήεντι νόον θώρηκι πυκάσσας,
καὶ τάμε λυσσαλέους ἀπατήνορος αὐχένας Ὕδρης

10 As Rachele Ricceri aptly points out to me, forty-seven is a very interesting (and perplexing) number. Was the author of this epigram able to read more Gregorian orations than the forty-five known to us? Or should we think that his collection included some spurious texts?

11 On the contrary, Theodore Prodromus' elegiac poem in praise of the Nazianzen was added in the fifteenth century as introductory piece in ms. Paris. gr. 554 (a collection of Gregory's works: see Zagklas 2016, 229). Such additions and reuses are far from surprising.

12 See respectively Montagu 1610; Sajdak 1914, 268–269; Nimmo Smith 2010, 135.

13 See http://www.dbbe.ugent.be/occ/4350.

14 Vassis 2005, 2011.

15 S.vv. ἀμφιχάνω, θυμοπαγής, κελαινοπόρος, ὀλεσσίνοος.

ἰὸν ὀλεσσινόοιο διαβλύζοντας ἰωῆς.
εὖτε γὰρ ἑπταλόφοιο θεηδόχα πώεα Ῥώμης
ἠθάδος ἰθυβότοιο λελασμένα τηλόθι μάνδρης
δόγμασι μιστύλλοντο πολυσχιδέεσσι νομήων,
λυγρὸν ἀσημάντοισι ῥοπαῖς νομὸν ἀμφιχανόντα,
μοῦνος Χριστὸς ἔην ἐπιτάρροθος· ἀπροφάτως γὰρ
πλαζομένης πραπίδεσσι φίλης ἰθύντορα ποίμνης,
Γρηγόριον συνάεθλον ἀμαιμακέτου Βασιλείου
Καππαδόκων μετὰ γαῖαν ἐς ὁπλοτέρης χθόνα Ῥώμης
εἴρυσεν ἀντολίηθεν ἑωσφόρον· ἐκ δέ οἱ ἀκτὶς
ἡδυεπὴς στομάτων ἀνεπάλλετο, πασσυδίην δὲ
οἶδμα κελαινοπόροιο διαυγάζουσα μενοινῆς
θυμοπαγῆ κατὰ βαιὸν ἀνωχλίζεσκεν ὀμίχλην.

2 σοφοῖς Montagu 3 θεομάχον ms., Montagu: corr. Sajdak 5 καὶ τάμε λυσσαλέους ms.: καί γε μεθυσσαλέους perperam legit Montagu, unde καὶ τέμε λυσσ- Sternbach ap. Sajdak 6 ἴον codici trib. Sajdak, haud recte 10 νομόν ms.: νόμον edd. -χανοντα ms: -χάνοντα male Sajdak 18 βαῖον Montagu

Gregory, who spoke to men by divine inspiration, writing the flowers of his eloquence in 47 wise books, cut off the turpitude of heresy, aggressive and hostile to God, and protected the minds of people with a speaking breastplate. He severed the frenzied heads of the deceitful hydra, dropping with poison of a mind-destroying voice. When the pious flock of Rome of seven hills, far from its usual fold providing righteous nourishment, oblivious of it and gaping for noxious pastures in absence of a guide, was shattered by the contrasting ideas of its shepherds, Christ was its sole helper. At once He sent a guide to the errant mind of his dear sheep: Gregory, ally of invincible Basil, from the land of Cappadocia a light-bearer from the East to the new Rome. A ray of sweet words sprang forth from his mouth, and shining on the stream of their thoughts lost in darkness, it removed the soul-constraining mist.

1: the line proves quite similar to Theod. Prodr. *Tetrast. in Gr. Naz.* 2b.1 *Γρηγόριον μερόπεσσι* ὁμοῦ *Θεὸς ὤπασε δῶρον*.[16] It is very tempting to suppose that Theodore, whose interest in Gregory's work is well known,[17] found John's verses at the

16 D'Ambrosi 2008, 140.
17 For a recent, excellent assessment, see Zagklas 2016.

beginning of some manuscript now lost and was impressed by their elaborate diction. On the other hand, μερόπεσσι(ν) before the feminine caesura is—as Filippomaria Pontani points out to me—especially common in Gregory's poetical corpus (more than twenty occurrences, including *AP* 8.241.1),[18] so that both John and Theodore may independently echo such usage.

Whether μερόπεσσι depends on θεηγόρος (who spoke to men by divine inspiration) or rather on χαράξας κτλ. (writing for men, etc.), remains unclear.

θεηγόρος: in all likelihood, an allusion to ὁ Θεολόγος, the standard epithet of Gregory in Byzantine literature,[19] already attested in the fifth and sixth centuries[20] and well established in the seventh (e.g., in the *Chronicon Paschale* and in the acts of the Ecumenical Councils). Cf. *Synagoge* θ 20 Cunningham (= Phot. θ 51 Theodoridis, *Sud.* θ 98 Adler, *Et. Gen.* AB ~ *Et. Gud.* 261.4 Sturz, [Cyr.] *Lex.* θεη 2 Drachmann) θεηγόροι· θεολόγοι. The word is attested from the imperial age (Hld. 2.4.3),[21] occurring in late poetry (anon. *AP* 1.80.1; [Orph.] *A.* 541; Eudoc. *S. Cypr.* 1.270; Paul. Sil. *Amb.* 106) and, quite predictably, in Christian and Byzantine authors. It is very frequent in Nonnus, ten times in *Dion.*, fifteen times in *Par.*, always in this metrical position:[22] cf. especially *Dion.* 38.70 τοῖα γέρων ἀγόρευε *θεηγόρος· ἀμφὶ δὲ μύθῳ* κτλ. (on Idmon). Gregory is repeatedly called θεηγόρος by Nicephorus Blemmydes (thirteenth century), in both his *acolouthia* (ll. 5 and 25) and his iambic canon (ll. 44 and 92) in praise of the Nazianzen:[23] note *acol.* 24–25, ποίοις εὐφημιῶν ἄνθεσι / καταστέψωμεν τὸν θεηγόρον; (another interesting similarity between John's poem and a Byzantine author: but this one too may be due to mere chance, all the more since θεηγόρος is also common in book epigrams[24] referring to Gregory).

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18 Not only in Gregory's poems, of course. Cf. Call. *Hec.* fr. 115.2 Hollis; *PLitGoodspeed* 2, fr. a.i.4 (Meliadò 2008, 43); four occurrences in Oppian's *Halieutica*, three in ps.-Oppian's *Cynegetica*, eight each in Quintus of Smyrna and Nonnus (*Dion.* 7×, *Par.* 10.94), Musae. 93, etc.

19 The same happens in Tzetzes, *Chil.* 7.916–917 Leone ὅρα τὸν θεηγόρον μοι, βλέπε τὸν χρυσολόγον, / ἀκούομεν τὸν Ὅμηρον, οἷος ὁ Δημοσθένης, apparently alluding to Gregory and John Chrysostomus respectively.

20 Cf. Philost. *H.E.* 8 fr. 11 (if the epithet belongs to the original text); Proc. G. *Procl.* fr. 2, p. 111 Amato[1] = 502 Amato[2] (probably not a late forgery: see Amato 2010); Eutych. *Pasch.*, *PG* LXXXVI 2400B; Zach. Mit. *Amm.* 1118–1119, p. 131 Minniti Colonna; Oecum. *Apoc.* 1.1.5 (p. 30 Hoskier = 65.35 De Groote) and 12.20.5 (p. 259 H. = 291.437 De G.).

21 No need to mention anon. *TrGF* *118b ὦ παντὸς ἔργου καὶ θεηγόρου λόγου, in fact the first line of George of Pisidia's *Hexaemeron* (as De Stefani 1994 rightly pointed out).

22 See De Stefani 2002, 159 on *Par.* 1.74; Livrea 1989, 188–189 on 18.160; Spanoudakis 2014a, 352–353 on 11.229.

23 Heisenberg 1896, 122–123, 129–131. The parallel was pointed out by Sajdak 1917, 59 with n. 7.

24 I am grateful to Rachele Ricceri, who pointed out to me several texts from the *Database of Byzantine Book Epigrams* (see http://www.dbbe.ugent.be/typ/722, http://www.dbbe.ugent

ἄνθεα μύθων: no strict parallel for this phrase, but see Nonn. *Par.* 21.117 ἄρνας ἐμὰς ποίμαινε σαόφρονας ἄνθεσι βίβλων (cf. here βίβλοισι at l. 2, and the pastoral metaphors at ll. 7–9 and 11).

2: τεσσαράκοντα καὶ ἑπτά: cf. Nonn. *Par.* 2.99 ἓξ καὶ τεσσαράκοντα (in the first half of the line).

σοφαῖς βίβλοισι χαράξας: the metaphor is not unusual (cf. Mel. *AP* 7.417.7 = *HE* 3990 πουλυετὴς δ' ἐχάραξα τάδ' ἐν δέλτοισι πρὸ τύμβου, [Man.] 2.198–199 ὅσ' ἐν βίβλοις ἐχαράχθη / κρυπταῖς),[25] but the attentive reader can perceive a strong influence of Nonnus' *Paraphrase*. See, above all, *Par.* 7.160 θέσφατα μυθήσαντο σοφῇ κεχαραγμένα βίβλῳ and 12.73 σοφῇ τάδε πάντα πέλει κεχαραγμένα βίβλῳ: add 2.89 θεοπνεύστῳ κεχαραγμένον ἔπλετο βίβλῳ, 8.22 θεογλώσσῳ κεχαραγμένον ἔμφρονι βίβλῳ, 20.138–139 θέσπιδι βίβλῳ / ὃς τάδε πάντα χάραξε, 21.141–142 αἴ κε χαράξῃ, / βίβλους κτλ.[26]

3: cf. Nonn. *Dion.* 31.252 οὐχ ἅλις *αἶσχος* ἐκεῖνο *θεοστυγές*. Nonnus is very fond of θεημάχος (*Dion.* 29×, *Par.* 3.94, 8.107, 18.66, always in the same metrical *sedes*), an epithet that perfectly suits both the enemies of Dionysus and those of Christ.[27] John may also have had in mind *Dion.* 24.147 θεηγενὲς ἔρνος Ἐνυοῦς and/or 26.6 μιαιφόνον οἶστρον Ἐνυοῦς: at any rate, Ἐνυοῦς/ἐνυοῦς appears twenty-four times at verse-end in the *Dionysiaca*.

4: for the *Wortstellung*, cf. Nonn. *Dion.* 27.210 κρείσσονι λαχνήεντι δέμας θώρηκι καλύπτων. The epithet αὐδήεις occurs eight times in the *Dionysiaca*, three in the *Paraphrase*: cf. especially *Par.* 15.15, where Christ declares ἄμπελος αὐδήεσσα πέλω—not just a voice, but the voice of salvation.[28] A further parallel for αὐδήεντι θώρηκι is provided by *AP* 9.198 Νόννος ἐγώ· Πανὸς μὲν ἐμὴ πόλις, ἐν Φαρίῃ δὲ / *ἔγχεϊ φωνήεντι* γονὰς ἤμησα Γιγάντων (I am Nonnus; Panopolis is my native city; in Alexandria I mowed down the race of Giants with my speaking sword), an epigram probably composed by either Nonnus himself or someone who knew his poetry very well.[29]

.be/typ/1865, http://www.dbbe.ugent.be/typ/2138, http://www.dbbe.ugent.be/typ/3509, http://www.dbbe.ugent.be/typ/3714).

25 Further parallels in Livrea 2000, 273.

26 See Accorinti 1996, 130; on the sacrality of books in Late Antique literature, Agosti 2010b.

27 See Livrea 1989, 142.

28 Caprara 2008 discusses the passage effectively. On the importance of voice in Nonnus, see also Rotondo 2008; Franchi 2013, 278.

29 Livrea 1987, 110–113 (= 1991, 450–453) convincingly argued that the epigram refers to both

5–6: the similarity with Nonn. *Dion.* 28.273 *λυσσαλέης προχέων ὀλεσήνορα βόμβον ἰωῆς* is quite striking. The rare λυσσαλέος appears before the fifth century AD only in A. R. 4.1393, [Man.] 4.539 and Triph. 402; then in Nonnus, *Par.* 16.69 and some ten times in the *Dionysiaca*.[30]

τάμε ... αὐχένας Ὕδρης: cf. Nonn. *Dion.* 25.198–199 τέμνων αὐτοτέλεστα θαλύσια φωλάδος ὕδρης / φυταλιὴν πολύδειρον ἀνασταχύοντα δρακόντων, ibid. 215 θάμνον ἐχιδνήεντα ταμὼν παλιναυξέος ὕδρης.

ἀπατήνορος: another very rare epithet, attested only in Euph. *SH* 418.25 = fr. 19a.25 Lightfoot Διωνύσου Ἀπατήνορος, Triph. 137 ἀταρβήτοιο θεῆς ἀπατήνορα τέχνην, Nonn. *Dion.* 26.118 ἀπατήνορι μύθῳ, *Par.* 8.129–130 ὅτε σκολιόφρονι βουλῇ / αἱμύλα κωτίλλων ἀπατήνορα μῦθον ἰάλλει (Nonnus is also fond of ἀπατήλιος, *Par.* 8.177, 12.100 and often in the *Dionysiaca*).

ὀλεσσινόοιο: not attested elsewhere, with the exception of a *lectio deterior* in Theodore Prodromus, *Carm. hist.* 8.130 Hörandner (οἰνοχαρὴς τελέταρχος ὀλεσσιγόου Διονύσου: in a context celebrating Dionysus, one expects to hear about the god's power as destroyer of sorrow, not of human mind).[31]

διαβλύζοντας: yet another very poorly attested word, occurring twice or thrice in prose and—unsurprisingly—in Nonnus, *Dion.* 22.21 (in the same metrical *sedes*).

7 ff.: the poet alludes to the years 379–381, when Gregory (whom Basil of Caesarea, in his last days, had warmly recommended for such a task) was sent to Constantinople in defense of Nicene orthodoxy and subsequently enthroned as bishop. To be sure, he was not so happy with that, and eventually resigned his office during the Second Ecumenical Council. But that is another story, one that surely could not suit John's eulogistic strategy.

ἑπταλόφοιο ... Ῥώμης: the epithet, traditionally pertaining to Rome (cf. Plu. *Aet. Rom.* 69.280d, Metrod. *AP* 14.121.1, *Or. Sib.* 2.18,[32] 13.45, 14.108), refers here to Constantinople. The "New Rome" (cf. below, l. 13) could not resist the temptation to match the *Septimontium*, whose status of cultural icon need not

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the *Dionysiaca* and the *Paraphrase*. See also Gigli Piccardi 2003, 46–50, and cf. *Dion.* 25.266 ἔμπνοον ἔγχος ἔχοντα καὶ ἀσπίδα πατρὸς Ὁμήρου, ibid. 270 ὄφρα κατακτείνω νοερῷ δορὶ λείψανον Ἰνδῶν (with Agosti 2010b, 11–12).

30 Nine undisputed occurrences, plus 9.259 (λεπταλέῳ ms.: λυσσ- Koechly, rejected by both Keydell and Chrétien) and 28.49 (διψαλέος ms.: λυσσ- Marcellus, accepted by modern editors).

31 Hörandner 1974, 237, with commentary (aptly mentioning John of Memphis) at 243. Theodore's line is almost "Nonnian" in diction and style (cf. Magnelli 2003, 183 n. 8).

32 With Lightfoot 2007, 447 ad loc.

detain us here,[33] with seven (alleged) hills of her own.[34] This will become commonplace in Byzantine times: cf., e.g., Theod. Prodr. *Carm. hist.* 1.104–105 Hörandner ἀλλ᾽ ὦ Σιὼν ἑπτάλοφε δευτέρα νεωτέρα, / θύγατερ Ῥώμης παλαιᾶς, οἶκος ἐμῶν ἀνάκτων,[35] Tzetz. *Chil.* 9.649–678 Leone. If Brandes was right in arguing that this motif is scarcely attested before the eighth century AD,[36] our poem (on its chronology, see below) may count among its earliest occurrences.

θεηδόχα: first attested in Gr. Naz. *Carm.* I 2.34.226, then in Nonn. *Dion.* 13.96 and *Par.* 21.47. After Nonnus, it reappears in John of Gaza (47 Lauritzen), in the St Polyeuktos epigram (*AP* 1.10.49),[37] and in later Byzantine authors.

8: ἠθάδος ἰθυβότοιο λελασμένα: first attested in Attic drama and classical prose,[38] ἠθάς later becomes a Nonnian *Lieblingswort*, *Dion.* 75×, *Par.* 29×. At the beginning of a line, cf. especially *Dion.* 11.334 ἠθάδος ὀρχηθμοῖο and above all *Par.* 21.80 ἠθάδος ἰχθυβότοιο (which John reused by just omitting one letter). Relevant parallels can be found at *Dion.* 34.347 on the maenads who, pursued by Deriades, ἄστεος ἐντὸς ἵκανον ἀποσπάδες ἠθάδος ὕλης (entered the town, torn from their familiar woods), at *Par.* 10.10 πώεα ποιμαίνειν προκαλίζεται ἠθάδι φωνῇ (the shepherd "calls his flock to graze with his familiar voice"), and, most significantly, at *Par.* 10.49–51, where Nonnus rewrites the famous passage on Christ as Good Shepherd: *ποιμὴν καλὸς ἔφυν καὶ πώεα καλὰ νομεύω· / γινώσκω δ᾽ ἐμὰ μῆλα, καὶ ἠθάδα μηλοβοτῆρα / ταῦτά με γινώσκουσιν* (a Good Shepherd am I, and I tend good flocks: I know my sheep, and they know me as their familiar shepherd).[39] Gregory, in John of Memphis' view, will be another Good Shepherd, a true vicar of Christ. Placing forms of λελασμένος after the feminine caesura is almost mandatory in epic poetry, as we can see in Homer (*Il.* 4×, *Od.* 2×),

33 See, most recently, Vout 2012 (quoting previous literature).

34 I am very grateful to Mary Whitby and Maria Ypsilanti for pointing this out to me. Cf. Brandes 2003; Vout 2012, 25–27; on the complex relationship between the original Rome and the new one in Late Antiquity, see Grig and Kelly 2012.

35 Hörandner 1974, 180. Theodore here reworks, in a truly Byzantine perspective, D. P. 355 Ῥώμην τιμήεσσαν, ἐμῶν μέγαν οἶκον ἀνάκτων.

36 Brandes 2003, 60–64.

37 First half of the sixth century: see Connor 1999; Pizzone 2003; Whitby 2006.

38 The date of *Orac.* 374 Parke-Wormell (l. 3: ἠθάδ᾽ ἔχων ἐσθῆτα) remains uncertain: see Fontenrose 1978, 360; Cappelletto 2003, 356–358.

39 Cf. l. 48, where the wolf scatters the sheep in absence of a guide (μῆλα διασκεδάσας σημάντορος οὐ παρεόντος, from John 10.12–13): a situation that our poet clearly evokes when he describes the faithful of Constantinople in danger and despair (ll. 7–10).

Quintus of Smyrna (10×), Triphiodorus (629) and Nonnus (*Dion.* 7×): but the presence of ἠθάς reveals, once more, a Nonnian model, i.e., *Dion.* 11.453 λελασμένος ἠθάδος ὄχθης.

Apparently unattested elsewhere is ἰθυβότος, presumably formed on the analogy of ἰθυβόλος (postclassical), ἰθυδρόμος (Phil. Thess. *AP* 6.103.3 = *GPh* 2751), ἰθυπόρος (Opp. *H.* 5.677, Nonn. *Dion.* 5×, *Par.* 2×, Paul. Sil. *Soph.* 310, 858, *AP* 6.64.4 = 17.4 Viansino, Iul. Aeg. *AP* 6.68.1), but probably also influenced by more "ethical" compound adjectives such as ἰθυκέλευθος ("straight-pathed", *Dion.* 8×; in a moral sense *Par.* 11.168, 12.158) and ἰθύνοος ("of righteous mind", [Apoll.] *Met. Ps.* 10.4, Nonn. *Dion.* 41.353, Paul. Sil. *Soph.* 1017). The meaning appears to be "providing righteous nourishment," and the syntax seems to imply that ἠθάδος ἰθυβότοιο … μάνδρης be construed with both τηλόθι (far from …) and λελασμένα (oblivious of …). Nonnus' fondness for compounds in -βοτος is well known.[40]

τηλόθι μάνδρης: the phrase, modeled on the Homeric τηλόθι πάτρης, comes directly from Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carm.* II 1.16.39, II 1.19.55, II 1.45.215 (always at line-end).

9: δόγμασι μιστύλλοντο πολυσχιδέεσσι: John wittily plays with his Homer, cfr. *Il.* 1.462–465 καῖε δ' ἐπὶ *σχίζῃς* ὁ γέρων … αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ κατὰ μῆρ' ἐκάη καὶ σπλάγχν' ἐπάσαντο, / *μίστυλλόν* τ' ἄρα τἄλλα καὶ ἀμφ' ὀβελοῖσιν ἔπειραν (the old man burned the victims on billets of wood … and when the thigh pieces were burned, and they had tasted the inner parts, they cut the rest into small pieces and spitted them), 2.425–428 καὶ τὰ μὲν ἂρ *σχίζῃσιν* ἀφύλλοισιν κατέκαιον … αὐτὰρ—ἔπειραν (these parts they burned on billets of wood without leaves … and when …). Heresy has really torn the "pious flock" into pieces! The adjective πολυσχιδής is quite common, though in the dat. pl. -έεσσι it only occurs in Oppian (*H.* 4.409) and in Nonnian poets (Paul. Sil. *Soph.* 593, Jo. Gaz. 477 Lauritzen). Let us also note that the form (ἐ)μιστύλλοντο appears only in Nonnus: six times in the *Dionysiaca*, in the "formulaic" half-line ἐμιστύλλοντο μαχαίρῃ.

10: ἀσημάντοισι: cf. *Il.* 10.485 ὡς δὲ λέων μήλοισιν ἀσημάντοισιν ἐπελθών, already imitated by both Triphiodorus (616 ἀσημάντοις ἐπὶ μήλοις) and Gregory (*Carm.*

40 Apart from the usual ἱπποβότος, μηλοβότος and μελισσοβότος, he employs the much rarer ἰχθυβότος (*Par.* 21.80, quoted above: elsewhere only at Opp. *H.* 2.1 and *Epic. adesp.* 3.36 Powell = *GDRK* 18v.15, a poem of uncertain date, see Pellin 2010) and λεοντοβότος (*Dion.* 1.21, 8.240, 9.147: elsewhere only at Str. 16.1.24 and 16.4.9): καλλίβοτος (*Dion.* 35.59), ἐλεφαντοβότος (*Dion.* 39.26), δρακοντοβότος (*Dion.* 6×) and περισσόβοτος (*Par.* 6.44) are not attested elsewhere.

II 1.19.66 μή τις ἐμοῖς μήλοισιν ἀσημάντοισιν ἐπελθών).[41] The adjective is frequent in Nonnus, often in the same metrical *sedes*.[42]

νομόν: the "pasture" suits the context better, in my view, than "laws" or "customs" (νόμον, printed by both editors).

ἀμφιχανόντα: from ἀμφιχάσκω ("gape for"), used in both epic (*Il.* 23.79) and tragedy (A. *Ch.* 545, S. *Ant.* 118): cf. Gr. Naz. *Carm.* II 1.1.58 σφέτερον μόρον ἀμφιχανόντες (from Opp. *H.* 4.229). Thus -χανόντα (perfectly consistent with Nonnus' accentuative principles: see below), not -χάνοντα, erroneously printed by Sajdak and explained in *LBG* s.v., I 74, as a form of an alleged ἀμφιχάνω.

11: the poet reworks Gr. Naz. *Carm.* I 2.2.271 μὴ Χριστὸν ἔχων ἐπιτάρροθον αἰεί. Cf. also II 1.1.157 νόμων ἐπιτάρροθοι, I 1.9 *addit.* 50 παθέων ἐπιτάρροθος (maybe spurious),[43] anon. *AP* 1.29.2 ὁ Χριστὸς καὶ ἐμοῖς ἐπιτάρροθος ἔσσεται ἔργοις.

12: ἰθύντορα: attested in [Man.] 6.358, Gr. Naz. *Carm.* II 1.34.141, [Orph.] *A.* 3×, and six times in Nonnus, always in this metrical *sedes*. Cf. especially ἰθύντορα κόσμου at *Par.* 6.57 and 8.173; *Dion.* 26.283–284 ὄφρα κεν ἱλάσκοιτο τανύπτερον υἱέα Μαίης, / γλώσσης ἡγεμονῆα, σοφῆς ἰθύντορα φωνῆς.

13: συνάεθλον: a markedly Nonnian word,[44] *Dion.* 29×, *Par.* 4× (elsewhere only [Opp.] *C.* 1.195 and 4.379, though σύναθλος is frequent in Byzantine prose).

ἀμαιμακέτου: here "invincible," in accordance with a well-established tradition of Homeric exegesis (*LfgrE* I 604.49–52), not "furious," "raging," as usually (but not invariably) in Nonnus.[45]

14: μετὰ γαῖαν: *Nonnum sapit* before the feminine caesura (*Dion.* 6×, *Par.* 3×: the only other occurrence in this metrical *sedes* is A. R. 4.722).

ὁπλοτέρης … Ῥώμης: cf. Gr. Naz. *AP* 8.79 (= *Carm.* II 1.93), l. 9 εἴνατον ὁπλοτέρῃ Τριάδ' ἤγαγον, ὦ Ἄνα, Ῥώμῃ.[46]

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41 Cf. also I 2.1.116 οἶστρος ἀσημάντοισι φορεύμενος ἀφραδίῃσιν.

42 See De Stefani 2002, 180; Greco 2004, 151, aptly remarking that in the *Paraphrase* the adjective expresses "l'idea del mancato accoglimento di un messaggio."

43 Edited (from ms. Laur. plut. 7.10, f. 52^{r-v}) and discussed by Wyss 1946, 159–172. Moreschini, in Moreschini and Sykes 1997, xii is skeptical on the ascription to Gregory.

44 See De Stefani 2002, 218.

45 Who probably connected it with μαίνομαι and/or μαιμάω: see Livrea 1989, 135–136 (but at *Dion.* 1.296–297 ἀμαιμακέτῃσιν … χερσί presumably means "with his invincible hands," and the same holds true for 30.127 and 43.324).

46 Further parallels in Simelidis 2009, 156; Magnelli 2010, 144.

15: ἀντολίηθεν ἑωσφόρον: a tantalizing parallel in Theodore Balsamon (twelfth century), *Epigr.* 45.6 Horna τοὶ γὰρ *ἀντολίηθεν ἑωσφόροι* ἀμφανέντες.[47] But this may be due to mere chance. Cf. also anon. *APl.* 65.1 (in praise of Theodosius I) ἔκθορες ἀντολίηθε φαεσφόρος ἥλιος ἄλλος.

16: ἀνεπάλλετο: the verb is common in poetry, yet Nonnus, whose interest in any kind of swift movement is well known, proves quite fond of it.[48]

17: κελαινοπόροιο: not attested elsewhere, as far as I know. Lines ending with μενοινή preceded by a lofty epithet are common in Nonnus.[49]

18: θυμοπαγῆ: another *hapax legomenon*, presumably formed on the analogy of θυμοδακής (*Od.* 8.185, etc.: also used by Nonnian poets, cf. Pampr. fr. 3.101 Livrea, Christod. *AP* 2.359). For the *Wortstellung* cf. Nonn. *Dion.* 6.35–36 ὄφρα μερίμνας / *θυμοδακεῖς* Δήμητρος ἀποσκεδάσειε τραπέζῃ.

κατὰ βαιόν: before the feminine caesura in *PVindob. Rainer* 29801 l. 76,[50] D. P. 622, Q. S. 4.347 and 15 times in Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*.

ἀνωχλίζεσκεν ὁμίχλην: similar hemistichs in Nonn. *Dion.* 31.167 ἀναπλήσειεν ὁμίχλην, 38.86 ἀνηκόντιζεν ὁμίχλην.

All in all, the shadowy John of Memphis knew Gregory's poetry very well; he knew Nonnus (both the *Dionysiaca* and the *Paraphrase*) even better, and imitated him in almost every line. The mid-fifth century can thus be fixed as *terminus post quem*. If he really was from the region of Memphis, the Arab conquest of Egypt (639–640) is a very plausible *terminus ante quem*. That he was a later author, connected in some way with Islamic Egypt but writing in the Greek-speaking world, appears unlikely: one should rather consider the possibility of a false ascription, but this too is hard to believe, if we take into account his use of meter. His verses are perfectly "Nonnian" on every side. At l. 2, τεσσαράκοντα offends against Meyer's First Law (words beginning in the first foot should not end with the "second trochee"), but such violations occur in Nonnus as well.[51] Apart from that, John's metrical technique is fully consistent with the complex rhythmical principles of the Nonnian hexameter:[52] his five verse

47 Horna 1903, 202.
48 See Agosti 2003, 366–367; Spanoudakis 2014a, 229.
49 Agosti 2003, 547 collects all the relevant evidence.
50 Bernsdorff 1999, 70 (with commentary at 154–155).
51 The evidence is collected and discussed in Magnelli 2014a, 267–275.
52 For a comprehensive assessment of Nonnus' metrical practice, see Keydell 1959, 35*–42*; and now Magnelli 2016.

patterns (*ddddd* 1, 3, 5, 7–8, 13–16; *dddsd* 2, 6, 12, 17–18; *dsddd* 9–10; *sdddd* 11; *dsdsd* 4) are the same five (out of nine) more widely used by Nonnus;[53] he observes all the other pauses and bridges that fifth-century poets inherited from the Alexandrian tradition, as well as the typically Nonnian rules concerning both prosody (avoidance of elision, Attic shortening, and hiatus; *correptio epica* only with οι and αι, cf. ll. 2 and 15; lengthening in a *biceps* only in the first foot, cf. l. 11 μοῦνος) and word accent (final paroxytone with a short vowel in the last syllable, l. 10;[54] paroxytone words ending at the penthemimeral caesura, ll. 5, 11, and 16; trithemimeral caesura when oxytone words end with the "third trochee," l. 18[55]). The last Greek author who could match these standards was George of Pisidia (first half of the seventh century), whose poem *On Human Life* in 90 hexameters is definitely Nonnian in both meter and style.[56] Later poets were not so skillful: Dionysius the Studite (the author of a refined metrical encomium of Theodore and Anatolius),[57] Leo the Philosopher,[58] John Geometres and, in the eleventh century, the gifted Christopher of Mitylene[59] all produced dactylic poetry of very good quality, but their diction is far less Nonnian, and their hexameter is not Nonnian at all. Not even the author of the famous tenth-century epitaph from Galakrenai,[60] whose imitation of Nonnus is widely known, observes the latter's metrical rules so strictly.[61] To sum up, John of Memphis cannot be dated much later than the age of Heraclius.

53 See Magnelli 2016, 356–357.

54 Reading ἀμφιχανόντα, not Sajdak's erroneous ἀμφιχάνοντα: see above, comm. ad loc.

55 Not so at l. 2, τεσσαράκοντα καὶ ἑπτά: but Nonnus himself has a fair number of exceptions to the rule; see Magnelli 2016, 363 with n. 74 (quoting previous literature).

56 Gonnelli 1991 is the reference critical edition. For a valuable assessment, see Whitby 2014.

57 Edited by Speck 1968, 307–309, and most recently by De Stefani 2014, 383–387, with sensible stylistic analysis.

58 On his poetry, see Westerink 1986, who convincingly argues that Leo's claim about his poem on Job, ὅτι σαφηνείας ἕνεκα καὶ γλυκύτητος τὰς τραχυτέρας ὁ λόγος ἀποστρέφεται λέξεις, χρῆται δὲ πεζοτέραις καὶ μᾶλλον Ὁμηρικαῖς, may imply that "the more difficult poetic style which he has decided not to use is apparently that of Nonnus and of the later poets of the *Anthology*, Paul the Silentiarius, Agathias, and their circle" (203).

59 John Geometres' metrical practice is discussed by van Opstall 2008, 67–88; Christopher's by De Groote 2010 and, more briefly, 2012, lxv–lxxii (some additions in Magnelli 2014b, 385–387). On Byzantine poetry down to the tenth century, Lauxtermann 2003 remains pivotal; Tissoni 2016, 696–701 provides an up-to-date survey of Nonnus' reception in Byzantine literature.

60 TR64 in Rhoby 2014, 636–640, with detailed analysis. On this poem, Sevcenko 1987 still deserves attentive reading: see also De Stefani 2014, 387–388.

61 Let us also note that John of Memphis appears to delight in four-word lines (*versus tetracolos*): his eighteen hexameters feature four "regular" instances (6, 9, 13, 17) and two more

His identity remains a mystery—at least, one that I was not able to solve. For evident chronological reasons, he cannot be identified with the Egyptian John who was the Meletian bishop of Memphis in the first half of the fourth century.[62] In the volumes of the *Prosopography of the Late Roman Empire* we find some 400 individuals named Io(h)annes, including a fair number of rhetors, literates, and σχολαστικοί (and many Egyptians), but none of them appears to come from fifth/sixth century Memphis or to be a promising candidate anyway. One could think of a Ἰωάννης ὁ γραμματικός who allegedly wrote *AP* 9.628, two undistinguished hexameters included in a sequence from Agathias' *Cycle*:[63] yet I see no point in merging a shadowy figure with another. Other scholars, more acquainted than me with prosopography, local history, church history, and documentary texts, will hopefully discover new evidence and shed more light on John of Memphis. At the moment, what we can confidently say is that he must have written between c. 460 and c. 640, i.e., during either the decades after the Nonnian "revolution" or the very first period of Byzantine literature *stricto sensu*. Whether he was one of the first "Nonnians," like his fellow countrymen Pamprepius, Christodorus and Colluthus, or rather a much later imitator, like George of Pisidia, we will never know. At any rate, his little poem is yet another telling instance of Nonnus' influence on "minor" (minimum?) poets of Late Antiquity and early Byzantine age; a research field not yet exhausted,[64] and not without relevance for literary history.[65]

including an appositive (16 πασσυδίην-δέ, 18 κατὰ-βαιόν). Such lines were widely used by Hellenistic poets, but even more by Nonnus and his followers: see Vian 2003, 215–219; Agosti 2010a, 90–95 and 2013, 40–44 (cf. Magnelli 2016, 367–368, quoting further literature).

62 On him, see Arnold 1989, 67–69 and 214.

63 *PLRE* IIIA, *Ioannes* 61. He seems not to be identical with John Barbucallus (Cameron and Cameron 1966, 12; Gullo 2013, 128–130). To identify him with John of Gaza (Cameron and Cameron 1967; Schulte 1994, 487) is attractive, but totally speculative: cf. Busch 1999, 212 n. 307; Lauritzen 2015, x.

64 In recent years, important contributions on the reception of "modern" style in Late Antique inscriptional poetry are due to Gianfranco Agosti: see especially Agosti 2005; 2007; 2008; 2010c; 2011–2012; 2015.

65 I am very grateful to Filip Doroszewski, for his support, patience, and friendly hospitality in Warsaw; to Ettore Cingano and his colleagues at the Ca' Foscari University of Venice, where I had the privilege to deliver an Italian version of this chapter; to Matteo Agnosini, Rachele Ricceri, and Francesco Valerio, who read these pages in advance of publication and helpfully commented on them.

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CHAPTER 23

Nonnus, Christodorus, and the Epigrams of George of Pisidia

Mary Whitby

George of Pisidia, who flourished under the Emperor Heraclius (AD 610–641), was the last surviving poet to compose works on a grand scale in Greek in the classical manner before the Arab invasions engulfed the Greek and Roman world. The best-known part of his corpus, long panegyrical works in iambic trimeters in honour of Heraclius, was edited by Agostino Pertusi in 1959/60. Pertusi's intention of editing a second volume containing George's religious and reflective poems—which he dated after the poems for Heraclius[1]—was never realized, and only relatively recently have these other poems begun to receive proper attention.[2] In my view, the distinction Pertusi made between the two different types of poem is unfounded: many of the so-called panegyrical poems include moral and religious elements and vice versa. This is especially clear in the long *Hexaemeron*, which, despite its avowed Christian theme, begins and ends with celebration of George's patron, the Patriarch Sergius (AD 610–638) and of Heraclius' victory over the Persians in 628.[3] Likewise a substantial part of the shorter poem *On the Resurrection*, not included in Pertusi's collection, is devoted to praise of Heraclius' son Heraclius Constantine; it is plausibly dated to the time of the Avar threat in the 620s.[4] A more accurate determinant of chronology is not theme, but metre: datable poems show that George paid increasingly strict attention to the placing of word accent.[5]

1 Pertusi 1960, 15–16.

2 See especially Gonnelli 1998 (edition of George's *Hexaemeron*, 1864 lines); Gonnelli 1991, with Whitby 2014. Anna Maria Taragna has written valuable articles on the poems *On Alypius* (2004) and *On the Resurrection* (2007), and on George's language of deceit (2009). A new edition of poems not edited by Pertusi is in preparation by W. Hörandner and A.M. Taragna. Lauxtermann 2019 now has excellent discussions of these poems.

3 *Hex.* 1–56, 1792–1864; cf. Gonnelli 1995; Whitby 1995.

4 Taragna 2007. Lauxtermann 2019, 30–31 proposes Easter 625 or Easter 626. Howard-Johnston 2010, 18–19 prefers a date of 613.

5 Lauxtermann 2003b, esp. 180–184 (with further bibliog.): no oxytone endings after AD 623 (hence epigrams LXII, LXV, LXXVII, LXXXIII, LXXXIVb, LXXXVI Sternbach all pre-623; LXI, LXX, LXXIX Sternbach probably not post-625 as they contain consecutive proparoxytone endings). These epigrams, then, are contemporaneous with George's poems on Heraclius' Persian campaigns. See further Gonnelli 1995, 119 n. 13.

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In this chapter I consider another neglected part of George's corpus, his epigrams, and in doing so pay tribute to the work of a great Polish Scholar, Leo Sternbach, whose edition of these epigrams in *Wiener Studien* 1891 and 1892 has not yet been superseded.[6] A new critical edition by Marc Lauxtermann (University of Oxford) remains unpublished: I would like to thank him for making it available to me.[7]

The manuscript used by Sternbach (Paris Suppl. Gr. 690) is the oldest witness to George's poetry. It is an anthology of Greek verse and prose, dated by Sternbach to the twelfth century, which also contains several of George's longer poems.[8] The epigrams are preserved in three separate sections, first a small group of 8 poems,[9] followed by two much larger groups, respectively of 50 and 57 poems,[10] giving a total of 115 poems, of which 108 were first published by Sternbach.[11] The collection is not complete—there is a lacuna immediately before the last group of poems[12]—and the folios of the manuscript are loose, so the original arrangement is uncertain.[13] In addition, two poems by George, on the chapel of the Holy Reliquary of the Virgin at Blachernae in Constantinople, are preserved in the first book of the *Greek Anthology*, in a group of poems on buildings found *in situ* (*AP* 1.120, 121).[14]

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6 For comments on Sternbach's (St) edition, see Papagiannis 2003a, 2003b.

7 Lauxtermann follows Sternbach's arrangement, but renumbers the poems, since he begins with a short sequence omitted by Sternbach (n. 9 below). Tartaglia's (T) 1998 complete text and translation of George's poetry rearranges the epigrams thematically, thus introducing a third numbering sequence. Rearrangement is problematic, since there are difficulties about division of the epigrams, as noted by both Lauxtermann 2003a and Papagiannis 2003a and 2003b. Further discussion, Tartaglia 2004.

8 Date: Sternbach 1891, 1. Other poems: *Hexaemeron*, lines 143 ff. and a book epigram on it; *On the Resurrection*, *On Alypius*, *On the Restoration of the Holy Cross*, *On the Vanity of Life*, *On Heraclius' Return from Africa*, *On Bonus*, *Persian Expedition* 1–2: see Lauxtermann 2003a, 329–337. Only the last three of these poems are included in Pertusi's edition: his distinction between 'panegyrical' and 'religious' is not replicated in the manuscript tradition.

9 Fols. 45^v–46^r. These poems are also found in a number of other manuscripts and they appear to have been transmitted in association with George's *Hexaemeron*: Lauxtermann 2003a, 334–335, 2003b 177–178. CVIII St is not always included. The other poems in this group were omitted by Sternbach from his *Wiener Studien* edition.

10 Fols. 64^v–65^v (V–XLIX St) and fols. 116^r–117^r (L–CVI St).

11 Lauxtermann 2003a, 335 notes that four poems, on the life of Christ, are copied twice, i.e., in both the second and the third group. Sternbach's *Wiener Studien* edition also includes four of the longer poems from Paris Suppl. Gr. 690 (*On Alypius, On the Restoration of the Holy Cross, On Heraclius' Return from Africa, On Bonus*).

12 And a small lacuna in fol. 46: Lauxtermann 2003a, 334 n. 2.

13 Lauxtermann 2003a, 329–330, pointing out some instances where folios are clearly misplaced.

14 Gregory of Kampsa's epigraphical collection, compiled c. 880–890, and incorporated in

All but three of the surviving epigrams are in George's preferred metre, iambic trimeters (or dodecasyllables).[15] Most are two, some four, lines long; only seven poems extend to six or more lines.[16] These briefest of poems, not written in epic hexameters, may seem far removed from the voluminous and voluptuous output of Nonnus and the poetry of his followers, and indeed in many ways they are. Although the majority of the eight poems in the first short group are secular and probably derive from a collection of literary epigrams,[17] almost all George's epigrams are on religious themes, written to accompany representations, icons or other pictorial images:[18] a cycle relates to the life of Christ,[19] many others are concerned with saints and martyrs.[20] A significant number describe religious buildings:[21] these were probably written for display in the places they describe, as is clearly the case for the two poems on the Blachernae church mentioned above. There can be no doubt about George's profoundly religious environment, and even though he may have written many more secular epigrams than survive in our collection, this strongly religious slant is a salutary corrective to the tendency to view George primarily as Heraclius' panegyrist.[22]

Cephalas's anthology: Lauxtermann 2003b, 179; Cameron 1993, 109–111, 290, 334. Par. Suppl. Gr. 690 contains *AP* 1.120 only (= LIXb St), discussed below. See further Lauxtermann 2003a, 336.

15 XLIV St (on the Theotokos chapel in the Patriarchate) and XCIX St (on the Cross) are in hexameters; XCVI St (on the Salutation) consists of an elegiac couplet and two hexameters.

16 I include C St (an address to Lazarus and his response), but not CII St (where lines 5–6 are not integral), nor CVII St (a long book epigram linked with the *Hexaemeron*, probably not by George). Agosti 2008 observes that Late Antique literary epigrams are characteristically short, although ekphrastic poems are often longer, as are epigraphical ekphrastic poems, of which *AP* 1.10 (on the church of St. Polyeuktos) is a striking example; see esp. pp. 687–688 on George.

17 Cf. n. 9 above. Other secular poems were placed at the end of the collection from which the author of Par. Suppl. Gr. 690 extracted George's poems: Lauxtermann 2003a, 336–337.

18 Lauxtermann 2003a, 65–66, suggesting that some were book epigrams, also 197–198; cf. Agosti 2008, 687. Byzantine epigrams typically relate to an object, rather than being purely literary: Lauxtermann 2003a, 29–31; Tartaglia 2004, 813–816.

19 XXIX–XXXIV and L–LIX St, sixteen poems, beginning with the Magi and ending with the Salutation; see Lauxtermann 2003a, 335; 2003b, 178.

20 E.g. V–XXIV, LXXIX–XCV St.

21 XXV, XXVII, XXXVII–XLV, LIXb (= *AP* 1.120) LXIII St; XLVI–XLVII St, relate to secular buildings. See further below.

22 Three of the surviving epigrams praise Heraclius (XLVII St = 105 T, 110 T, 109 T, the last two not in St), one praises Heraclius Constantine (XLVIII St = 108 T), and one the patriarch Sergius (107 T). Cf. Tartaglia 2004, 812; and Gonnelli 1996 on 110 T.

But I want to argue that these little poems can also be related to the tradition of Nonnus and Late Antique occasional and epigraphic poetry, both in their response to images and buildings, and also stylistically, in their passion for wordplay and lexical inventiveness. They also betray a Nonnian characteristic that is diluted in George's imperial panegyrics—a sharp wit.

1 Response to Images

It is well known that, in the *Dionysiaca*, Nonnus frequently directs the response of his audience by using as intermediary an anonymous viewer, who reacts with amazement to what he sees, starting with the sailor who sees Europa riding on a bull (*Dion.* 1.92–124 Vian), who cries (1.93):

> ὀφθαλμοί, τί τὸ θαῦμα;
>
> Eyes, what's this wonder?[23]

Against this we may set a couplet composed by George on the Crucifixion (LXXVIIIb St, 33 T):

> ὢ θαῦμα, θαῦμα, τῇ σαθρᾷ ξύλου φύσει
> τὸ στερρὸν ἐξέκοψε τῆς ἀπιστίας.
>
> Oh wonder, wonder, with the feeble nature of wood[24]
> it [sc. the Cross][25] rooted out the harshness of disbelief.

Two other poems begin with this same half-line.[26] Wonder is as central to the Christian story as it is to the bizarre events of myth.

In a valuable series of recent discussions that explore Late Antique responses to the visual and the relationship between text and audience, Gian-

23 All English translations are my own.

24 The power of the wood of the Cross is a favourite topic of George, e.g. it destroys Persian fire and idolatry (*Rest. Cruc.* 13–14).

25 Papagiannis 2003a, 223 argues that Sternbach's epigrams LXXVIII (*On the Cross*) and LXXVIIIb were originally one poem. Hence the subject of ἐξέκοψε (l. 2) is ὁ σταυρὸς (LXXVIII.2); cf. Papagiannis 2003b, 35–36.

26 XXXIII St = 30 T on the arrest of Christ; LXII St = 101 T on the Theotokos. On the interpretation of XXXIII.2 St, see Papagiannis 2003b, 18–19; Lauxtermann 2003b, 187 suggests that the text of LXII St may be corrupt.

franco Agosti has characterized amazement (θαῦμα) as both 'a central issue in Nonnian aesthetics' and 'one of the key concepts of late-antique aesthetics', that was also, of course, an everyday experience and 'the current way of expressing appreciation'.[27] Agosti draws attention to the quotation of Nonnus, *Dion.* 1.93 in a fifth/sixth century inscription from Beer-Sheeba in Palestine, that neatly demonstrates both the diffusion of Nonnian *paideia* and the propriety of wonder as a response to real-life magnificence in a building or work of art.[28] George too is probably responding to a representation of the Crucifixion in his cry of wonder and in doing so is operating in a well-attested tradition.

Amazement is also a response of Christodorus of Coptus to several of the antique statues in the Baths of Zeuxippus in Constantinople described in the poem preserved as the second book of the *Palatine Anthology*.[29] In that poem, which is actually a series of short epigrams on individual statues, he guides his audience in how to respond to the images before them.[30] Many of Christodorus' brief character sketches are two to four lines long, like George's poems on saints and holy figures. I suggest that George uses techniques similar to those of Christodorus in evoking the figure for the beholder. For example, of the philosopher Heraclitus, Christodorus says (*AP* 2.354–356 Beckby):

καὶ σοφὸς Ἡράκλειτος ἔην, θεοείκελος ἀνήρ,
ἔνθεον ἀρχαίης Ἐφέσου κλέος, ὅς ποτε μοῦνος,
ἀνδρομέης ἔκλαιεν ἀνάλκιδος ἔργα γενέθλης.

And there was wise Heracleitus, a godlike man,
inspired glory of ancient Ephesus, who once alone
bewailed the deeds of the weak mortal race.

Compare this with George's poem on the disciple John (LXXXIV St, 69 T):

27 Agosti 2014, 154–155 (discussing responses to cities and buildings), quoting 154; 2016, 662 (second and third quotations), with bibliography. Further examples in a range of contexts, including response to miracles in Nonnus' *Paraphrase*: Agosti 2014, 154 n. 64.

28 *SEG* 8.281, which is also modelled on Nonn. *Dion.* 48.602–603: Agosti 2014, 155; 2016, 667–668 n. 119. Further epigraphic examples relating both to churches and to secular buildings: Agosti 2010, 169–172. Paul the Silentiary also uses the vocabulary of wonder as a response to Justinian's rebuilding of Hagia Sophia after its partial collapse, e.g., *Descr.* 68–71, 153, 202, 399, 447, etc. See further below.

29 E.g., 82, 117, 168, 209, 243, 288, using τέθηπα, ἠγασάμην, θάμβησα.

30 Agosti 2008, 692 accepts the view that Christodorus' poem was included in the *Anthology* because it was perceived as a series of individual epigrams. On this poem, see further Tissoni 2000; Kaldellis 2007; Bär 2012; Whitby, 2018.

Βροντὴ γαλήνης, παρθένων παρρησία,
ῥήτωρ ἁλιέων καὶ σοφῶν θεηγόρος,
ὁ δεύτερος παῖς τῆς τεκούσης τὸν Λόγον.

Thunder in calm, confidant of virgins,
orator for fishers, theologian for the wise,
the second son of She who bore the Word.

In each case the poet is unconcerned with the appearance of the figure, but rather evokes key facts about his subject: Heraclitus' godlike status, Ephesian origin, and tears for humanity; Jesus' designation of his disciples James and John as 'Sons of Thunder', John's humble background, but reputation as a scholar and author of the fourth Gospel, and Jesus' entrusting to him of Mary shortly before his death.[31]

Alternatively the statue may be addressed and commended for its achievements or virtues. Of Isocrates Christodorus writes (*AP* 2.256–258 Beckby):

χαῖρε φάος ῥήτρης, Ἰσόκρατες, ὅττι σὺ χαλκῷ
κόσμον ἄγεις· δοκέεις γὰρ ἐπίφρονα μήδεα φαίνειν,
εἰ καὶ ἀφωνήτῳ σε πόνῳ χαλκεύσατο τέχνη.

Hail, Isocrates, light of rhetoric, because to the bronze
you bring ornament. For you seem to reveal wise counsels,
even though art forged you in mute toil.

Christodorus has his own preoccupations with the imprisoning effect of the craftsman's bronze on the vitality of its subjects,[32] but his purpose is to convey the essence of Isocrates' achievement as a wise counsellor and rhetorician. George too wishes to capture the essence of Mary's unique position as Mother of God (LXIb St, 99 T):

Γύναι, γυναιξὶ κόσμος εὐκλεὴς ἔφυς,
κοινὴ δὲ παντὸς τοῦ γένους σωτηρία.

Lady, you are a glorious ornament to women
And the common salvation of the whole race.

31 Mark 3.17, John 19.26–27.
32 Cf. Kaldellis 2007.

George chooses the same word 'ornament' (κόσμος) as Christodorus,[33] and his comment similarly focuses on his subject's invisible qualities.

In many respects Christodorus and George have very different agendas: George does not, for example, share Christodorus' concern to clarify the identity of the figures he describes. But both poets focus on key qualities of the person depicted, to contextualize the image for the viewer by evoking shared knowledge common to speaker and listener. As Ruth Webb has shown, the 'vividness' (ἐνάργεια) that is key to an ekphrastic description[34] is precisely this evocation of images (φαντασίαι) shared by speaker and listener, which enables the listener to engage actively and respond emotionally to the subject.[35] The aim is to persuade the viewer that he can understand and interpret the image seen. I suggest that George too is working within this tradition that goes back to the Late Antique school textbooks, although for him the pool of shared knowledge is biblical rather than Hellenic.

2 Address and Response

The poem addressed to Mary (LXIb St) is located in a short sequence of epigrams about the Mother of God and monuments associated with her (LIXb–LXIV St). Immediately before it is a three-line poem with the lemma 'On the Theotokos in supplication' (LXI St, 98 T):

Οἴκτερον υἱὲ τῆς τεκούσης δάκρυον·
ὡς παῖς ἄκουσον· ὡς Θεὸν πρεσβεύομαι,
δι' ἧς πέπονθας ἐν φάτνῃ τὰ σπάργανα.

Pity, Son, the tear of She who bore you!
Hear as son; I supplicate you as God,
I through whom you endured in a manger the swaddling clothes.

Commenting on these two poems together, Luigi Tartaglia persuasively suggests that the poem addressed to Mary (LXIb St) should be seen as Christ's reply to her supplication of her Son in poem LXI, arguing that it is Jesus alone who

33 Cf. e.g. *AP* 2.177 ἀφωνήτῳ ἐνὶ κόσμῳ (of Hecuba).

34 Aphthonius, *Progymnasmata* 36 Rabe: ἔκφρασίς ἐστι λόγος περιηγηματικὸς ὑπ' ὄψιν ἄγων ἐναργῶς τὸ δηλούμενον, '*ekphrasis* is a descriptive speech, bringing the subject vividly before the eyes' (trans. Webb 2009, 201).

35 Webb 2009, esp. chs. 4 and 5.

calls Mary Γύναι ('Lady': John 19.26).[36] Tartaglia relates the poems to the Paraklesis icon-type, in which the Virgin is depicted holding up a scroll inscribed with words of intercession to Christ, on which the word 'Pity' (οἰκτείρω) regularly recurs, although surviving examples date from the eleventh or twelfth centuries. However, in this connection we might also look back to the epigraphic tradition: Gianfranco Agosti has noted that dialogue is common in Late Antique epigrams, particularly funerary inscriptions, both epigraphic and literary, in which the dead person converses with a passerby—a context not dissimilar to Mary's intercession to her crucified or resurrected Son—and also in Christian monumental building inscriptions.[37] An inscribed epigram in the church of the Virgin at Madaba, dated to AD 767, exhorts the viewer to look on her image and purify his heart, flesh, and deeds: Agosti notes that this epigram cannot be separated from the Virgin's image, much as in George's lines.[38] In George's poem, Mary converses not with an external viewer but with her dead son. However, the words guide the viewer's response to the depictions. I would argue that George looks back as well as forward in the development of the epigrammatic tradition.

3 Ekphrastic Poems: Response to Buildings

A smaller group of George's epigrams celebrate buildings, thus picking up another strand developed by poets after Nonnus, ranging from large-scale ekphrastic works designed for performance, such as John of Gaza's poem on the cosmic tableau in the Winter Bath and Paul the Silentiary's on Hagia Sophia, to much briefer poems inscribed on the building itself.[39] Their primary function is to commemorate the founder and the magnificence of the building. Of George's fifteen poems in this category, most are four or more lines, the longest fourteen.[40] One celebrates the library of George's patron, the Patriarch Sergius

36 Tartaglia 2004, 814–815.

37 Agosti 2010, esp. 165–170.

38 *SGO* 22/56/01, discussed by Agosti 2010, 170.

39 For John of Gaza, see Lauritzen 2015; Paul the Silentiary, De Stefani 2009. A number of small-scale epigrams from the sixth century are preserved, either *in situ* (such as the epigram inscribed in Justinian's church for Sergius and Bacchus), or in the first book of the *Palatine Anthology*. The grandest is that on Anicia Juliana's church of St Polyeuktos (*AP* 1.10; 76 lines): Whitby 2006, Agosti 2008, 689–692. Further discussion of *Palatine Anthology*: Baldwin 1996; other epigraphic material Agosti 2010, 170–180.

40 Tartaglia 2004, 812 counts 95 poems on saints and NT figures, etc., 11 on sacred buildings. According to my count fifteen poems in total relate to buildings. Cf. n. 16 above on the greater length of ekphrastic poems.

(XLVI St = 106 T), one a bath restored by Heraclius (XLVII St = 105 T). The remainder relate to sacred buildings,[41] many of them churches dedicated to the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, to whose intervention contemporary sources ascribed the retreat of the Avars from the walls of Constantinople in 626.[42] Hence these poems are often closely linked to celebration of the defeat of the enemy, for example the poem on the bath (XLVII St, 105 T):

τὸ λουτρὸν αἰχμάλωτον εἶχεν χρόνος,
ὥσπερ πρὸ τούτου τὰς πόλεις οἱ βάρβαροι·
ἀλλ᾽ ὁ κρατήσας καὶ Σκυθῶν καὶ Περσίδος,
ὡς τὰς πόλεις, καὶ τοῦτο δεικνύει νέον.

Time held the bath captive,
As previously the barbarians held the cities;
But he who conquered both Scythians and Persian,
like the cities, this too he shows forth new.

The parallel between renewal of a building and renewal of a city is not new. In his poem celebrating Justinian's restoration of the church of Hagia Sophia, for example, Paul the Silentiary calls upon Old Rome on the Tiber to come and celebrate New Rome/Constantinople who, because of the new church, now surpasses her.[43]

A poem inscribed on the narthex of the chapel of the Holy Reliquary of the Virgin at Blachernae first calls upon the viewer to wonder in familiar terms (LIXb St, 95 T, *AP* 1.120):

εἰ φρικτὸν ἐν τῇ γῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ ζητεῖς θρόνον,
ἰδὼν τὸν οἶκον θαύμασον τῆς Παρθένου·
ἡ γὰρ φέρουσα τὸν Θεὸν ταῖς αγκάλαις,

41 XXVII St = 84 T on the porch of the monastery of the Theotokos; XXXVII–XLIV St = 86–93 T are a sequence on the chapel of the Theotokos in the Patriarchate; XLV St = 94 T on a circuit (περίδρομος) made in the dome by the patriarch, see further Whitby 2019 and Whitby (forthcoming). LXIII St = 102 T on the shrine of the Virgin of Pege; and two poems on the narthex of the Holy Reliquary at Blachernae (*AP* 1.120–121: only the first is transmitted in the manuscript edited by Sternbach, LIXb St, 95–96 T). Poem XXV St = 82 T on the door of a church is not specific to a particular building.

42 Cf. George's *Avar War* 1–9, *Chron. Pasch.* p. 716 Bonn, with Whitby and Whitby 1989, 169–170, esp. nn. 457, 476 for further references.

43 *Descr.* 152–167.

φέρει τὸν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ τοῦ τόπου σέβας.
ἐνταῦθα τῆς γῆς οἱ κρατεῖν τεταγμένοι
τὰ σκῆπτρα πιστεύουσι τῆς νίκης ἔχειν.
ἐνταῦθα πολλὰς κοσμικὰς περιστάσεις
ὁ πατριάρχης ἀγρυπνῶν ἀνατρέπει·
οἱ βάρβαροι δὲ παραλαβόντες[44] τὴν πόλιν,
αὐτὴν στρατηγήσασαν ὡς εἶδον μόνην,
ἔκαμψαν εὐθὺς τοὺς ἀκαμπεῖς αὐχένας.

If you seek on earth God's dread throne,
look on the house of the Virgin and wonder;
for she who bears God in her arms
bears him to this holy place.
Here those appointed to rule over the earth
are confident they hold the sceptres of victory.
Here many cosmic catastrophes
are averted by the unsleeping patriarch.
And the barbarians after taking over the city
when they saw that She alone was general
bent at once their unbending necks.[45]

The topos of barbarians bending necks that normally do not bend is also used by Paul the Silentiary in describing Justinian's conquests (*Descr.* 157–160) and of the impact of the Patriarch Eutychius' preaching on 'black-limbed' foreigners gathered in Hagia Sophia (*Descr.* 987–990). And Paul likewise locates Justinian's achievement in building Hagia Sophia in the broader context of his military victories, notably at *Descr.* 135–144.[46]

44 The reading of Paris Suppl. Gr. 690, παραλαβόντες, usually of property inherited or received without contention, is defended by Sternbach 1892, 58. Later mss. have either περιλαβόντες or προσβάλοντες τῇ πόλει; the last is read in the *Greek Anthology*, which derived ultimately from Gregory of Kampsa's collection of verse-inscriptions: Lauxtermann 2003b, 179. Papagiannis 2003a, 225–226 argues for the reading παραβαλόντες τῇ πόλει, 'as they approached the city' (LSJ s.v. B).

45 For the Virgin's defence of Constantinople, cf. *Avar War* 449–461. The Patriarch Sergius was prominent in the operation, since the Avar siege took place when Heraclius was away on campaign. In an earlier passage of the *Avar War* (130–137) George even identifies Sergius with the Virgin; see Whitby 1998, 266–268, Whitby (forthcoming).

46 Cf. *AP* 1.2, a four-line poem in elegiacs that commemorates the victories of Justin II and his restoration of the Virgin's church at Blachernae, inscribed on the apse.

George's cycle of eight epigrams celebrating a chapel of the Theotokos constructed or restored by Sergius in the patriarchal palace (XXXVII–XLIV St = 86–93 T) finds a parallel in the six poems (*AP* 1.12–17) celebrating Anicia Juliana's restoration of the church of St Euphemia in the quarter of Olybrius in Constantinople.[47] Both sets of epigrams play on the theme of the Trinity: *AP* 1.12 begins 'I am the house of the Trinity' (εἰμὶ δόμος Τριάδος), but then goes on to praise the three generations of the same family, Eudoxia, Placidia, and finally Anicia Juliana (c. AD 462–527/8), who were involved in its construction and beautification. The subsequent shorter poems (two or four lines in hexameters or elegiac couplets) are variations on this theme, giving particular prominence to the restoration undertaken by Anicia Juliana, who is mentioned by name in all but *AP* 1.13. George's cycle refers to Sergius by name twice (XXXIX.4, XLI.3), while XLIII is probably addressed to Sergius, and likewise XLII which has a very similar opening line.[48] Other poems are addressed to the Virgin herself (XXXVIII, XXXIX) or to the viewer (XXXVII). But George's major theme is not so much eulogy of the founder as the mystical and anagogical function of Sergius' splendid building. This comes to a climax in the final poem of the sequence (XLIV), which is elevated by the use of hexameters as opposed to George's preferred iambics. In it, George refers to the Trinity not in order to celebrate the three generations of one family as in the Anicia Juliana sequence, but to reflect upon the mystery of the Trinity as One in Three and Three in One (XLIV St, 93 T):

> τρισσατίοις σελάεσσιν ἕνα σπινθῆρα τυπώσας
> τρισσοφαοῦς θεότητος ἕνα σπινθῆρα διδασκεις.

> By shaping one spark with threefold radiance
> You teach that there is one spark of the Godhead of threefold light.

It is fair to say that here George has moved the celebratory building epigram familiar from Late Antiquity to a new theological level.[49]

47 *AP* 1.6 and 7 also belong together, though they are not contemporaneous; see Mango 1986, 25–28.

48 I make this suggestion on the basis of the reference to 'sleeplessness' (ἀγρυπνίας) in the last line (XLIII.3). Sergius' perpetual vigilance is a repeated theme in George, e.g., LIXb.8 St = *AP* 1.120.8 (quoted above), *Avar War* 137. But at *Bonus* 98 it is applied to Heraclius. See further Whitby 2019 and Whitby (forthcoming).

49 Papagiannis 2003b, 20 notes that the following epigram XLV.5–8 St has the same theme of one God in three *hypostaseis*.

4 Verbal Play and Verbal Virtuosity

This poem also leads to my final argument that George is a writer in the Nonnian tradition. A consistent feature of his epigrams, exemplified here, is the achievement of a pointed effect by verbal virtuosity, both in the deployment of new or unusual forms and through repetition. This is also a characteristic of his longer poems, but more forceful in the epigram's short compass. And, of course, it is also characteristic of Nonnus.

The epigram just quoted is one of George's few hexameter poems and it neatly illustrates his literary pedigree. The opening word τρισσατίοις is known elsewhere only from a dedicatory epigram by Julian of Egypt, a poet of Agathias' *Cycle*, who uses it twice in the opening line of *AP* 6.12:

γνωτῶν τρισσατίων ἐκ τρισσατίης λίνα θήρης
        δέχνυσο, Πάν·

Nets of threefold brothers from threefold hunting,
        receive, O Pan;

The dedicatory context of Julian's poem is quite different, but it is hard to doubt that George knew it. Even more illuminating is George's phrase τρισσοφαοῦς θεότητος, which occurs three times at this position in the line in the poems of Gregory of Nazianzus, twice in combination with σέλας. One example is in the last short poem of the group of poems on himself, *Carmina de se ipso* 2.1.99.1–3 (*PG* 37.1452.1):

ἄγγελοι αἰγλήεντες ἀπείρεσιον κατὰ κύκλον,
τρισσοφαοῦς θεότητος ὁμὸν σέλας ἀμφιέποντες,
Γρηγόριον δέξασθ' ἀνάξιον, ἀλλ' ἱερέα.

Angels glittering in boundless circle
Tending the common radiance of the Godhead of threefold light,
receive Gregory, unworthy, but a priest.

And the second at *Carmina dogmatica* 1.1.4.64–66 (*PG* 37.421.1), a passage referring to God's contemplation of his newly created universe:

κίννυτο κάλλεος οἷο φίλην θηεύμενος αἴγλην,
τρισσοφαοῦς θεότητος ὁμὸν σέλας ἰσοφέριστον,
ὡς μούνῃ θεότητι, καί ὧν θεὸς, ἔστ' ἀρίδηλον.

Stirred was he beholding the lovely gleam of its beauty,
common radiance of equal excellence of the Godhead of threefold light,
as it is manifest for Godhead alone, and those who worship God.[50]

In this final poem in celebration of Sergius' new chapel for the Theotokos, George not only honours his patron's theological position on the Trinity, but through these linguistic echoes demonstrates his own education in the Hellenic and Christian poets—works George doubtless read in Sergius' library, whose collection he tells us included 'thorns among the roses',[51] that is Hellenic or secular as well as Christian works.[52]

Verbal virtuosity is equally a feature of George's iambic epigrams. Sternbach listed ten neologisms in a note on his poem XX (= 60 T), five of them compound adjectives in the Nonnian manner,[53] a list that is not exhaustive. Consider a poem on the raising of Lazarus, not among those published by Sternbach (25 T):

ὁ τὴν φίλεχθρον συμβατεύσας τετράδα
τετραχθόνευτον ἐξανέστησαεν νέκυν.

He who trampled the tetrad that loves discord
raised up a corpse four days interred.

The first line alludes to the theological position of those who identified two natures in Christ, thus arguably turning the Trinity into four persons (a theme of George's longer poem *Against Severus*), the second to the miracle of the raising of Lazarus, whom John's Gospel tells had been dead for four days.[54] The play on 'four' is executed through the invented compound τετραχθόνευτον, while συμβατεύσας, 'trample' is itself innovative.[55]

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50 The third example is *Carm. de se ipso* 2.1.13 (*PG* 37.1244.5). The phrase occurs first in Origen, *Exp. in. pr.* (*PG* 17.204.8) τῆς τρισσοφαοῦς ἑνιαίας θεότητος, and the adjective is used in connection with the three hypostases by Maximus Confessor, *Myst.* 23.82; cf. also Jo. D. *Annunt. Mariae* (*PG* 96.656.9).

51 μηδὲν ταραχθῇς, εἰ θεωρεῖς ἐν ῥόδοις / καὶ τὰς ἀκάνθας (XLVI. 8–9 St = 106 T).

52 An alternative interpretation is that these lines contrast Christian and heretical works, e.g. Lauxtermann 2003b, 187.

53 Sternbach 1892, 51 κογχυλουργής, προφητοκήρυξ, σαρκόσαθρος, φθοροκτόνος, χρυσόλεκτος. Noted by Baldwin 1996, 103 n. 52.

54 John 11.39. Cf. *AP* 1.51, attributed to Gregory of Nazianzus.

55 Listed in LSJ only as a false reading meaning 'couple' in the paradoxographer Palaephatus; cf. βατεύω in *BGU* 45.21 (third century AD). βατεύσουσα is the problematical ms. reading at Eur. *Suppl.* 1003, often emended. The *TLG* does not list συμβατεύω.

The story of the paralyzed man whom his friends let down through the roof so that he could get close to Jesus[56] is likewise captured in a virtuosic distich (CIV St, 24 T):

τὸν σαρκόσαθρον, ἐκ στέγης βεβλημένον,
δείκνυσι Χριστὸς εὐσθενῆ στρωμνηφόρον

The man of unsound flesh, let down from the roof
Christ shows to be a stout bed-bearer.

Striking compounds frame the poem: the opening σαρκόσαθρον is George's coinage,[57] the final στρωμνηφόρον attested elsewhere only in ninth-century prose texts.[58] εὐσθενής is not found in Homer or Nonnus, but frequent in Quintus and later prose.[59] In such epigrams George's inventive epithets achieve an effect that is the opposite of Nonnus' characteristic expansiveness, in this poem capturing the essence of the well-known biblical story in nine words.[60]

A final example shows George's talent for alliteration and punning deployed in an entirely different context, for a medical remedy (115 T):[61]

πέπων πεπανθεὶς ἐξυδαροῖ γαστέρα
οἶνος δ' ἄκρατος ἐκπεποῖ τούτου κράτος.[62]

A ripe melon loosens the stomach
but unmixed wine mitigates its power.

There may have been much more of this witty, less serious poetry that was rejected by the early anthologist of George's epigrams.[63]

56 Mark 2.3 ff., Luke 5.18 ff.
57 Noted by Sternbach (n. 53 above).
58 Theognostus, *Canones* 566; Methodius, *Encomium et Vita Theophanis* 34; *Vitae Sancti Faustini Iunioris* 58.
59 LSJ and Lampe s.v.: thirty-one times in Quintus (1.178, 224, 232, etc.) and frequent in Cyril of Alexandria. It is used in conjunction with σαρκόσαθρον in the ninth-century *Life of Nicephorus Medicii*, sec. 11.
60 In CIV St note also the alliterative effect of the sibilant s-sound.
61 George's medical interests and knowledge are well known, e.g. *Pers.* 2.191–200 with Tartaglia's note, *Hex. passim.*
62 κράτος is Querci's emendation, printed by Tartaglia, for θράσος in the manuscripts.
63 This poem is from the first short group not published by Sternbach, see n. 9 above. CVIII St is a joke against a cleric, 114 T a witty dialogue between the poet and gout; the longer poem *On Alypius* is an affectionately humorous depiction of a cleric.

5 Conclusion

Writing in 1993, Alan Cameron drew a sharp divide between the *Cycle* of Agathias and the epigrams of George:

> This [the *Cycle* of Agathias] was the end of creative writing in the genre …
>
> The classicizing Indian summer was shortly followed by a Christian winter …
>
> The *Cycle* of Agathias represents the swan-song of the classicizing elegiac epigram … by the beginning of the seventh century the pattern of the Byzantine epigram for years to come had been firmly established by George of Pisidia: anything from two to a dozen or more iambic (dodecasyllabic) lines on a religious theme.[64]

In many ways he was right: in their predominantly iambic metre and religious focus, George's epigrams look forward to later Byzantine developments. But I have tried to argue that in their responses, themes, language, and techniques they are also recognizably Late Antique, rooted in the same intellectual and aesthetic world as the hexameter poetry of Nonnus and his successors as well as contemporary inscribed epigrams. In this way, George's epigrams also look back, Janus-like, as Barry Baldwin, writing shortly after Cameron, observed in a perceptive article.[65]

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64 Cameron 1993, quoting from 16, 48, 329.

65 Baldwin 1996, 102–104. At 103, Baldwin draws attention to other linguistic similarities between George's longer poems and works of Agathias and the *Cycle* poets, citing Frendo 1984.

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CHAPTER 24

Photius, the *Suda*, and Eustathius: Eloquent Silences and Omissions in the Reception of Nonnus' Work in Byzantine Literature

Domenico Accorinti

It is well known among Nonnian scholars that: (a) Photius (c. 810–c. 893), the ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople, does not mention the Egyptian poet in his *Bibliotheca*; (b) a marginal gloss in the *Suda* refers to Nonnus as (1) a native of Panopolis, (2) "a very learned man" (λογιώτατος), and (3) the author of a hexameter paraphrase of St. John's Gospel; and (c) Eustathius (c. 1115–1195), archbishop of Thessalonica, in his commentaries on Homer and Dionysius Periegetes, quotes anonymously and inaccurately a few lines from book 1 alone of the *Dionysiaca*, and says nothing about the Christian poem of Nonnus. This chapter offers a reconsideration of these eloquent silences and omissions in the reception of Nonnus' work in Byzantine literature, and aims at providing new insights into old questions.[1]

I begin with the *Bibliotheca* of Photius,[2] where we find no traces of Nonnus' poems. This should be no surprise nor is it a proof that he did not know Nonnus' work, since the Byzantine patriarch generally shows little interest in poetry, or in philosophy and science.[3] Yet this silence is particularly surprising and raises questions. For Photius does list and praise, *Bibl.* codd. 183–184 (II, 195–199 Henry), Eudocia's lost verse paraphrases of the Octateuch and the

1 This chapter is an expanded and revised version of § 2 of Accorinti 2016a.

2 For the date of Photius' work, see Treadgold 2013, 107: "The *Bibliotheca* can be dated fairly securely to the spring of 845, when Photius was in his early thirties." However, Ronconi places the composition of the letter to Tarasius, which opens the *Bibliotheca*, "shortly after February 870: in my view, this was the period when Photios' *Library* (or at least a first version of it) was concluded" (2013, 392); see now also Canfora 2016, xxvii.

3 Baldwin 1978; Treadgold 1980, 6; Wilson 1994, 7, 10–11; Fournet 2003, 539 n. 81; Dickey 2007, 104. For the 'problematic' exclusion of lyric poets from the *Bibliotheca*, see Acosta-Hughes 2010, 99. On Photius' notes see Schamp 1987, whose criticism of Photius' bibliographical information does not convince Hägg: "Photius sometimes states that he has not been able to find a certain book and has to rely on secondary sources, or that he has read only part of a book; that he would positively mislead his readers in other cases does not make sense" (1999, 44). On the *Bibliotheca* see also, more recently, Treadgold 2013, 106–109; and, especially, Canfora 2016.

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prophets Zachariah and Daniel, as well as her three-book epic on the conversion, confession, and martyrdom of St. Cyprian of Antioch, a work that could be classified as "hagiography in verse":

> Ἀνεγνώσθη μετάφρασις τῆς Ὀκτατεύχου· ἡρῷον δ' αὐτὴν μέτρον μετεποίει, λόγοι δ' ἦσαν η´ κατὰ ἀριθμὸν καὶ τομὴν τῶν ἀμειφθέντων, Εὐδοκίας δὲ τῆς βασιλίδος ἐν ἐπιγραφαῖς πόνον ἔλεγεν ἡ βίβλος τὸ μέτρον. Ὅπερ ὅτι καὶ γυναικὸς καὶ βασιλείᾳ τρυφώσης καὶ οὕτω καλόν, ἄξιον θαυμάσαι.
>
> Σαφὴς μὲν γὰρ ὁ πόνος ὡς ἐν ἡρῴῳ μέτρῳ, εἴ πού τις ἄλλος, καὶ νόμοις δὲ τῆς τέχνης βαθύνεται, ἐκεῖνο μόνον ταύτης ἐλλείπων, ὃ μέγιστόν ἐστιν εἰς ἔπαινον τῶν ἐγγὺς ἀμείβειν λόγους ἀξιούντων· οὔτε γὰρ ἐξουσίᾳ ποιητικῇ μύθοις τὴν ἀλήθειαν τρέπων ἡδύνειν σπουδάζει μειρακίων ὦτα, οὔτε ταῖς ἐκβολαῖς τὸν ἀκροατὴν διαπλανᾷ τοῦ προκειμένου, ἀλλ' οὕτω περὶ πόδα τὸ μέτρον ἔθετο τοῖς ἀρχαίοις ὡς μηδὲν ἐκείνων δεῖσθαι τὸν τούτοις ἐνομιλοῦντα. Τὰς μὲν γὰρ διανοίας οὔτε παρατείνων οὔτε συστέλλων ἀεὶ φυλάσσει κυρίας. Καὶ ταῖς λέξεσι δέ, ὅπου δυνατόν, τὴν ἐγγύτητα καὶ ὁμοιότητα συνδιαφυλάσσει ...
>
> Ἀνεγνώσθη τῷ αὐτῷ μέτρῳ καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς γλώσσης μετάφρασις προφητικῶν λόγων, τοῦ τε θεσπεσίου Ζαχαρίου καὶ τοῦ κλεινοῦ Δανιήλ· ἡ αὐτὴ δὲ χάρις τοῦ τεχνίτου διέπρεπε κἀν τούτοις.
>
> Ἐμπεριείχετο δὲ τῷ τεύχει, τῷ αὐτῷ τοῦ μέτρου χαρακτῆρι, λόγοι τρεῖς εἰς μάρτυρα τὸν Κυπριανόν· ἐδήλου δὲ ἄρα τὰ σπουδάσματα, ὡς παῖδες μητέρα, τῶν τῆς βασιλίδος, καὶ ταῦτα ὠδίνων ἔκγονα εἶναι.

> Read a *Paraphrase of the Octateuch*. It was converted into the metre of epic, in eight books numbered and divided in the same way as the original text. The manuscript in its title named Eudocia the empress as the author. That it should be the work of a woman who enjoyed the luxury of being empress, and that it should be so good, is remarkable.
>
> The text is as clear as any other in the metre of epic and shows deep mastery of the rules of the art, with only one exception, which is a very great merit in writers aiming at a close paraphrase: there is no attempt to deform the truth with fables and use poetic licence to charm the ears of young readers, nor is the listener distracted from the main theme by digressions; instead the metrical adaptation of the ancient text is so accurate that the reader of it has no need of the originals, because the meaning is always preserved precisely without expansion or abridgement, and the wording too, wherever possible, preserves a close similarity. [...]
>
> Read a paraphrase, in the same metre and in the same language, of the books of two prophets, the saintly Zachariah and the celebrated Daniel. Here too the skill of an artist was visible in the same way.

> The volume contained three books about the martyr Cyprian, in the same metre. These works showed, as children resemble their mother, that they too are a product of the empress's labours.[4]

The empress and poet Aelia Eudocia Augusta (c. 400–460), Theodosius II's wife, thus stands, according to Claudio Bevegni, as a double exception in Photius' *Bibliotheca*, as an exponent of poetry and as a woman.[5] Why does Photius, who expatiates upon Eudocia's hexameter paraphrases (μετάφρασις is the Greek term used in the *pinax* of Photius' *Bibliotheca* too[6]) and admires their closeness to the original,[7] pass over Nonnus' name in silence? For Nonnus, a contemporary of Eudocia, is the poet who wrote the *Paraphrase of St. John's Gospel*. This work, unlike Eudocia's poetic renderings, expands its *Vorlage* and turns into a genuine exegesis of the fourth Gospel.[8] It is easy to conjecture that if Photius had read Nonnus' verses, he would have been likely to compare them with Eudocia's paraphrases in his *Bibliotheca*.[9] Prob-

4 Trans. Wilson 1994 (slightly changed). See Rey 1998, 40–56; Usher 1998, 81; Bevegni 2006, esp. 11–12, 22, 28; Sowers 2008, 5, 143–144, 265–267; 2010, 22; Irwin 2012; Agosti 2013; Whitby 2013, 207–210; Efthymiadis 2014, 165–166; Gärtner 2014, 990.

5 Bevegni 2006, 11–12. See also West 1978, 111–115; Plant 2004, 198–209; Cameron 2016b, 73–76.

6 Acquafredda 2015, 83.

7 Baldwin 1978, 12 (cf. 14) rightly contextualizes Photius' judgment on Eudocia: "Eudocia's verse paraphrase of the *Octateuch* was 'as clear as the genre of epic allows'. The quality of σαφήνεια, a cliché from Lucian and Galen down to the polemics surrounding Arethas' obscurity, is constantly extolled in the *Bibliotheca*. Eudocia is also commended for keeping to her subject, in spite of writing in verse. This is a high compliment from Photius, who abhorred digressions in the prose writers reviewed by him. Most to the point is the Patriarch's assertion that Eudocia 'did not succumb to the usual poetic abuse of distorting the truth in order to please young ears'. This last judgement is clearly redolent of Plato's censure of poets in the *Republic*." For Bailey 2009, 21–22, Photius' praise of Eudocia's paraphrases for their closeness to the Greek original "seems somewhat unwarranted."

8 The paraphrases of Nonnus and Eudocia, though stylistically different, most likely had the same aim, that is "to provide cultivated Christians with acceptable Christian substitutes for the pagan classics" (Cameron 2016b, 76). On the interaction between Nonnus and Eudocia, see recently Alexandrova 2018, who deals with some linguistic coincidences between both authors.

9 Commenting on Photius' note about Eudocia's poem on St. Cyprian ("The volume contained three books about the martyr Cyprian, in the same metre. These works showed, as children resemble their mother, that they too are a product of the empress's labours"), Wilson 1994, 176 n. 4 adds: "This assertion is very curious: as the work is a cento made up of lines or parts of lines from Homer, the compiler had no chance of imposing a personal imprint on the style. Perhaps Photius assumes that Eudocia was *the only exponent* of the genre" (italics mine). As Whitby (2013, 208 n. 65) observes, Wilson 1994 "incorrectly describes this work as a cento." On the Homeric centos attributed to the empress Eudocia, see Sandnes 2011, 181–228.

ably he would also have criticized the digressions of which Nonnus made use, in that they can obscure the comprehension of the text, a fault of which Herodotus himself, according to Photius, *Bibl.* cod. 60 (I, 57–58 Henry), was guilty:

> Read Herodotus' *Histories* in nine books, named and numbered after the Muses. This author could be taken as a model of Ionic dialect, as Thucydides is of Attic. He has fables and digressions in large numbers, and these are pervaded by the sweetness of his thought, even if at times they are obscure in relation to the understanding of history and the proper appropriate style for it. Truth refuses to have its accuracy darkened by myths or to wander more than is proper in digression.[10]

Needless to say that the Byzantine patriarch was fond of stylistic comments and comparisons in his reading notes. For example, in cod. 94 (II, 34 Henry), Photius compares Iamblichus with Achilles Tatius and Heliodorus from the moral point of view:

> Read a novel by Iamblichus, a love story. There is less parading of indecency than in Achilles Tatius, but more display of immodesty than in the Phoenician Heliodorus. These three authors set out with virtually identical aim in writing a novel with a love interest, but Heliodorus is more serious and restrained, Iamblichus less so, and Achilles Tatius is indecent and shameless.[11]

Furthermore, concerning the now lost Greek *Metamorphoses* by Lucius of Patrai, in cod. 129 of the *Bibliotheca* (II, 103–104 Henry) Photius gives an account of the differences between this work and a shorter Greek text that is still extant, *Lucius, or the Ass* of Pseudo-Lucian:

> Read various books of the *Metamorphoses* by Lucius of Patrai. In style he is clear, pure and fond of pleasant effects. Though he avoids innovation in language, in the narrative he has an excessive liking for the fabulous, and one might say that he is another Lucian.
>
> Books 1 and 2 are virtually a transcript by Lucius of Lucian's story entitled *Lukis or the ass*, or else Lucian copied from Lucius. As far as one can

10 Trans. Wilson 1994. See van Hook 1909, 179.
11 Trans. Wilson 1994. See van Hook 1909, 183; Too 2010, 181.

> conjecture, Lucian looks more like the imitator (I have not yet been able to determine which of them is earlier).[12]

Thus, in my opinion, a parallel between Eudocia and Nonnus would have been natural—I dare say irresistible—for a literary critic like Photius, whose references "beyond the texts he is dealing with, whether intratextual, anecdotal, or biographical, point to a larger memory beyond the library itself."[13] In sum, even though *argumenta ex silentio* are not decisive, especially regarding the nature and aim of Photius' *Bibliotheca*,[14] I am inclined to think that Nonnus' poems were not read and discussed at the reading séances of Photius' circle.[15]

We are no luckier with the 'incontournable' *Suda*,[16] for the tenth-century Byzantine Greek historical encyclopedia does not have an entry for Nonnus, nor indeed for Quintus of Smyrna, although it devotes two entries to Triphiodorus (τ 1111 and 1112 Adler).[17] In discussing the relationship between the *Suda*

12 Trans. Wilson 1994. See Mason 1999; Sandy 1999, 86–87; Zimmerman 1999, 120; Carver 2007, 55; Too 2010, 181.

13 Too 2010, 184.

14 Whiston 1825, II, 593 (= Whiston and Maier 1999, 996–997): "As to that great critic Photius, in the ninth century, who is supposed not to have had this testimony [sc. a treatise of Josephus, called *Memoirs of the Jews' Captivity*] in his copy of Josephus, or else to have esteemed it spurious; because, in his extracts out of Josephus's Antiquities, it is not expressly mentioned,—this is a strange thing indeed!—that a section, which had been cited out of Josephus's copies all along before the days of Photius, as well as it has been all along cited out of them since his days, should be supposed not to be in his copy, because he does not directly mention it in certain short and imperfect extracts, no way particularly relating to such matters. Those who lay a stress on this silence of Photius, seem little to have attended to the nature and brevity of those extracts"; Treadgold 1980, 7: "In most cases, it is not difficult to determine whether Photius omitted a book because every educated man had read it or because not even he had read it; those who conclude from the absence of school texts that Photius neither knew nor cared about classical poetry and philosophy are certainly mistaken."

15 On the circle of Photius and its σχεδάρια, see recently Canfora 2016, xiv–xx, who stresses (xix) the character of 'collective work' of the *Bibliotheca*: "Non si insiste mai a sufficienza sul carattere di opera *collettiva* della *Biblioteca* foziana … Eppure il titolo vero ('Catalogo dei libri letti da noi') parla chiaro e dimostra che *non c'è UN autore*!"; *contra*, Too 2010, 179: "It [the *Bibliotheca*] relies on Photius' memory, and deficiencies in the work are due to the shortcomings of his memory … In fact, the *Bibliotheca* is so dependent on Photius' reading that it is an *ad hominem* construction, particular to this individual, his likes and dislikes and his ability at recollection: it is, as he says at the very beginning of the work, 'an inventory and enumeration of the books read *by us*.'"

16 I borrow this expression from Schepens 2010.

17 Gerlaud 1982, 6; Tomasso 2012, 404–408; Miguélez-Cavero 2013, 3. On *Suda*'s doublets, see Keyser 2013, 792, 794, 799, 801, 809.

entries and the lost *Onomatologos* of Hesychius of Miletus (6th century AD), as well as the verbal parallels between the *Suda* and the *Bibliotheca* of Photius, Alan Cameron has recently assumed that "despite the lack of a Suda entry, it is impossible to believe that Hesychius had no entry for a poet so important and influential in mid sixth-century Constantinople as Nonnus, author of a verse paraphrase of St John's Gospel as well as a *Dionysiaca*—and so undoubtedly a Christian." Thus, according to him, the absence of some bibliographical notices in the *Suda* may be explained as the consequence of a Byzantine epitome of the *Onomatologos*, which was presumably the source of the *Suda* lexicon.[18]

However, a marginal gloss in one MS of the *Suda*, *Marcianus gr.* 448 (coll. 1047), fol. 220ʳ, s.v. Νόνναι (ν 489 Adler), provides a rough biographical sketch of our Egyptian poet as (1) a native of Panopolis, (2) "a very learned man" (λογιώτατος), and (3) the author of a hexameter paraphrase of St. John's Gospel:

> Νόνναι: τοῦ μηνός. αἱ εὐθὺς μετὰ τὰς καλάνδας, ἤγουν μετὰ τὴν πρώτην τῆς νουμηνίας, δευτέρα δηλαδὴ τοῦ μηνός. μεθ' ἃς νόννας αἱ εἰδοί. δοκοῦσι δὲ παρ' αὐτὰς γενέσθαι αἱ ἀνόνναι, ὡς οἷον αἱ ἀνὰ τὰς νόννας διδόμεναι. ἰστέον δὲ ὡς ἔστι καὶ Νόννος κύριον, Πανοπολίτης, ἐξ Αἰγύπτου, λογιώτατος· ὁ καὶ τὸν παρθένον Θεολόγον παραφράσας δι' ἐπῶν.
>
> [Meaning certain days] of the month. They [come] right after the kalends, or rather after the first of the new month; that is, the second of the month. After the nones [are] the ides. It seems that the *annonae* ["grain doles"] are named after them, since they are distributed on the nones. One should note that there is also a proper name "Nonnos"; [that of] a man of Panopolis, in Egypt, a very learned man; he is the one who paraphrased the chaste Theologian in epic verse.[19]

The meager notice relating to Nonnus turns up again almost verbatim in Pseudo-Eudocia, *Violarium* 311 (514.1–2 Flach): Νόννος Πανοπολίτης ἐξ Αἰγύπτου, λογι-

18 Cameron 2016a, 266–268 (268). On Hesychius of Miletus, see Kaldellis 2005, whose attempt to reconstruct his life and work, providing arguments for his alleged paganism, fails to convince Cameron 2016a, 265–273. Costa 2010, 47 labels the reconstruction of Hesychius' *Onomatologos* on the basis of the *Suda* as a philological mistake ("abbaglio filologico"). For the similarities between Photius' lexicon and the *Suda*, see Theodoridis 2008; Dickey 2015, 473.

19 *SOL* s.v. Νόνναι, trans. W. Hutton, 21 March 2001; see below, n. 44.

ώτατος, ὁ καὶ τὸν παρθένον Ἰωάννην παραφράσας δι' ἐπῶν.[20] The sixteenth-century Greek scholar Konstantinos Palaiokappa (fl. 1539–1551), who forged the *Violarium* (Ἰωνιά) and attributed it to the empress Eudocia Macrembolitissa (c. 1021–c. 1090), wife of Constantine x,[21] merely substituted Ἰωάννην for Θεολόγον.[22] What is very striking in this passage is that neither the *Suda* nor the forger, who depends on its account, seem to be aware of Nonnus' major work, the *Dionysiaca*, as Arthur Ludwich remarked in the preface to his edition of Nonnus' poem:

> Ne is quidem, qui Eudociae Augustae nomine abusus Violarium conflavit, maioris operis a Nonno conscripti notitiam videtur habuisse; nam nihil de poeta prodidit memoriae nisi haec: Νόννος Πανοπολίτης ἐξ Αἰγύπτου, λογιώτατος, ὁ καὶ τὸν παρθένον Ἰωάννην παραφράσας δι' ἐπῶν.[23]

In her edition of the *Suda*, Ada Adler, following Johan L. Heiberg, dated the MS to the thirteenth century and, regarding the marginal gloss on Nonnus as an interpolation, printed it 'minoribus typis'.[24] However, authoritative scholars, such as Paul Maas and Nigel Wilson, considered *Marcianus gr.* 448 (coll.

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20 Flach 1880, 514 (in app. crit.): "Nonni vitam nescio qua de causa Suidas pratermisit"; see also Flach 1879, 49 n. 1: "Wenn wir übrigens hier ein Excerpt über den Dichter Nonnos durch Zufall erhalten haben, so ist einleuchtend, dass nur durch einen ähnlichen Zufall die Vitae von Musaios, Quintos u. a. aus derselben Zeit uns verloren sind." The excerpt on Nonnus was also published in Flach 1882, 149 (DLXVI) and 1883, 89 (DLXVI); see Costa 2010, 48–49.

21 Pulch 1880 and 1882; Cohn 1888; Jugie 1946, esp. 352–353; Leroy 1968; Kindstrand 2000; Dorandi 2009, 194; Costa 2010, esp. 50–52; García Bueno 2013, esp. 214–215; Brakmann 2016, 57–60.

22 See Golega 1930, 7–8, who also deals with the relationship between the marginal annotation in the *Suda*, considered to be an interpolation, and the addition in the upper margin of fol. 224^r in *Parisinus gr.* 1220 (fourteenth century), one of the MSS of Nonnus' *Paraphrase* (see Franchi 2013, 227–228): Ἰστέον ὅτι ὁ νόννος οὗτος αἰγύπτιος ὢν λογιώτατος· ὃς καὶ τὸν παρθένον θεολόγον παραφράσας δι' ἐπῶν ἡροϊκῶν. Cf. also González i Senmartí 1977–1980, 35–36.

23 Ludwich 1909–1911, I, vii. In his valuable article on the "Aspects of the *Suda*," Barry Baldwin does not deal with the *Suda*'s marginal gloss on Nonnus, but refers to the entry Αὐσόνιος (α 4460 Adler): Αὐσόνιος, σοφιστής, γεγραφὼς ἐπιστολὰς καὶ ἄλλα τινὰ πρὸς Νόννον ("Sophist. He wrote letters and certain other works addressed to Nonnus," *SOL* s.v. Αὐσόνιος, trans. M. Heath, 30 October 2000, url: https://tinyurl.com/y7a3doqd); see Baldwin 2006, 29: "[I]f, as is sometimes thought, this is the early Byzantine poet, it helps resolve the long-standing dispute over his date."

24 Adler 1928–1938, I, x–xi, xv–xvi and V, 255–256. The same gloss had been printed by Bernhardy 1853, II, 1006 in app. crit.

1047), one of Bessarion's manuscripts,[25] to be an autograph of Eustathius, archbishop of Thessalonica (c. 1115–1195), and consequently dated it to the twelfth century.[26]

Maas' arguments in favor of the Eustathian authorship of the annotations in *Marcianus gr.* 448 have been accepted by Aubrey Diller in an article on the tradition of Stephanus of Byzantium, the author of the *Ethnica* (c. 528–535), "the greatest pioneering enterprise of early Byzantine scholarship" in the late Martin West's words:[27]

> The ἐθνικά are also cited in certain scholia or interpolations in Suidas that go back to Eustathius. For they are found in an original form in codex Marcianus 448 in Venice, which contains Suidas in Eustathius' own hand. This large paper codex was originally in two volumes, according to the primary signatures of the quires. Folios 216–223, a quaternion first signed ᾱ, later κ̅θ̅, contain Suidas Νάβα ... Ὀζᾶν with marginalia citing ὁ ἐθνικογράφος or ὁ ἀναγραψάμενος τὰ ἐθνικά. There are no marginalia in other parts of the codex, and as they are confined to the first quire of the second volume they would seem to be primary in this codex. The form of the citations is also characteristic of Eustathius. Marc. 448 is therefore the archetype of the MSS. of Suidas that contain these marginalia and Eustathius is the author of these citations of the ἐθνικά.[28]

That this MS, as well as *Marcianus gr.* 460 (coll. 330), *Parisinus gr.* 2702, and *Laurentianus plut.* 59.2 and 3, was produced by Eustathius himself, has been irrefutably established on palaeographical grounds by Mariarosa Formentin and fully accepted by Elpidio Mioni in the catalog of Greek manuscripts in the Marciana Library at Venice.[29] Glosses and especially scholia were also added into the MS by the same hand that wrote the text.[30] This suggests that the marginal gloss on Nonnus was added by Eustathius himself.

25 Mondrain 2013, 195.

26 Maas 1934, 165, 1935, 305–307, 1936, 29 n. 33, and 1952, 2 n. 9; Wilson 1973, 226–227. On Eustathius, see recently Pontani 2015, 385–393.

27 West 2014.

28 Diller 1938, 335–336, cf. also 335 n. 9: "The annotations were added later by the first hand in Marc. 448 and their extent seems to depend on the structure of the codex."

29 Formentin 1983, 25, 28, 32, 42–43; Mioni 1985, 222–223. For a good discussion of the two autograph MSS containing Eustathius' commentary on the *Odyssey*, *Marcianus gr.* 460 (coll. 330) and *Parisinus gr.* 2702, see Cullhed 2012, who criticizes (448–449) an article by Makrinos 2007.

30 Formentin 1983, 28.

This conclusion, which seems to have been unnoticed by scholars, is not unimportant and deserves further attention. Again it was Ludwich who noted:

> Eustathius in Iliadis commentario quinquiens ex solo ampli operis initio versus aliquot laudavit semperque ea ratione, ut poetam sibi plane incognitum fuisse aperte proderet.[31]

Here are the five excerpts referred to from Eustathius' commentary on the *Iliad* with van der Valk's relevant notes ad loc.:

(1) ad Hom. *Il.* 3.235 (I, 644.16–18 van der Valk): ὁ γοῦν τὰ Διονυσιακὰ ποιήσας ὀκνήσας ἀκολουθῆσαι Ὁμήρῳ εἰς τὴν γενικὴν σύνταξιν, κατὰ αἰτιατικὴν πτῶσιν, ὥς που καὶ προγέγραπται, ἔφη τὸ "εὖ εἰδὼς πόνον ἄλλον ἐπὶ στονόεντι κάρητι" [*Dion.* 1.8]. "Locus parum accurate laudatus est. Nonn. τόκον, Eust. πόνον, Nonn. γονόεντι, Eust. στονόεντι."

(2) ad Hom. *Il.* 4.492 (I, 790.9–11 van der Valk): οὕτω δὲ καὶ τὸ "αἷμα δ' ἀνηκόντιζε" [*Il.* 5.113] καταχρηστικῶς εἴρηται καὶ ἐν Διονυσιακοῖς τὸ "τεύχεσιν ἀστράπτουσαν ἀνηκόντιζεν Ἀθήνην" [*Dion.* 1.10], ὁ Ζεὺς δηλαδὴ ἐκ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ.

(3) ad Hom. *Il.* 6.429 (II, 354.17–19 van der Valk): Ἰστέον δὲ καὶ ὅτι τὸ "σύ μοι πατὴρ καὶ πότνια μήτηρ" ἀπέχρησέ τινι τοιοῦτον εἰπεῖν τῷ Διονύσῳ τὸν Δία, γράψαντι οὕτως "ἄρσενι γαστρὶ λόχευσε πατὴρ καὶ πότνια μήτηρ" [*Dion.* 1.7].

(4) ad Hom. *Il.* 8.84 (II, 537.18–538.3 van der Valk): ἡ δ' αὐτὴ καὶ κάρηαρ καρήατος, ἐξ οὗ ἴσως κατὰ συγκοπὴν τὸ κάρητι παρὰ τῷ ποιήσαντι τὰ Διονυσιακά, οἷον "εὖ εἰδὼς πόνον ἄλλον ἐπὶ στονόεντι κάρητι" [*Dion.* 1.8], [ἤγουν πεπειραμένος, ὁ Ζεὺς δηλαδή, πόνου, ὅτε τὴν Ἀθηνᾶν ἐκ τῆς κεφαλῆς ἐγέννα, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ῥᾴων ἐσόμενος καὶ οὐ τοσοῦτον πονήσων ἐν τῷ γεννᾶν ἐκ τοῦ μηροῦ τὸν μυθικὸν Διόνυσον.] "Moneo codd. Nonni scribere τόκον (Eust. πόνον) ἄλλον ἐπεὶ (Eust. ἐπὶ) γονόεντι (Eust. στονόεντι) καρήνῳ (Eust. κάρητι). Opinor Eustathium Nonni locum e memoria (parum accurate) attulisse et eius lectiones nulla fide dignas esse. Hac de causa vocabulum πόνον voci τόκον substituit et praeterea vocem στονόεντι (Nonnus scribit γονόεντι) praebuit, quia huius vocis significatio accommodata est voci πόνος, quippe quod laborem, aerumnam, molestiam, denotet. Verba πόνος et στονόεις Eust. menti obversabantur, quia partus Iovis qui in initio Dionysiacorum enarratur, gravissimus erat, cf. etiam Nonn. 1, 9 ὄγκον ἔχων ἐγκύμονι κόρσῃ, quod brevi post ab Eust. laudatur (701, 2). Quod ad figuram κάρητι (codd. Nonn.

31 Ludwich 1909–1911, I, vi–vii.

καρήνῳ) attinet, Eust., ut videtur, meminit peculiarem vocis formam apud Nonnum legisse et hac de causa ei figuram κάρητι imputavit."

(5) ad Hom. *Il.* 8.84 (II, 538.10–11 van der Valk): Ὡς δὲ καὶ κόρση ἔστιν ὅτε ἡ κεφαλή, δῆλον ἐκ τοῦ "ὄγκον ἔχων ἐγκύμονι κόρσῃ" [*Dion.* 1.9], ὃ καὶ αὐτὸ ἐν Διονυσιακοῖς κεῖται περὶ Διός. "Nunc quidem accurate Nonni locum tradit."[32]

To the passages quoted by Ludwich, Rudolf Keydell added another two from Eustathius' commentaries on the *Odyssey* and Dionysius' *Periegesis*, both referring to *Dion.* 1.260 but without any indication of author:[33]

(1) ad Hom. *Od.* 8.166 (I, 289.34–37 Stallbaum): Ὅτι δὲ ἐκ τοῦ ξυνὸς γίνεται καὶ τὸ ἐν Ἰλιάδι ξυνήϊον, καὶ ὅτι καὶ ῥῆμά ἐστιν αὐτοῦ τὸ ξυνῶ ξυνώσω, οἷον, "γαῖαν ὁμοῦ καὶ πόντον ἐνὶ ξύνωσεν ἀγοστῷ" [*Dion.* 1.260; Keydell 1959, I, 10*: "memoria Eustathium fefellit"], ἤτοι μιᾷ δρακὶ λαβόμενος τῶν κάτω ἐκοινώσατο, δεδήλωται καὶ ἀλλαχοῦ.

(2) ad Dion. Per. 1 (*GGM* II, 213.23–25): καὶ οὕτω "γαῖαν ὁμοῦ καὶ πόντον ἐνὶ ξυνώσας ἀγοστῷ" [*Dion.* 1.260], τοῦτο δὴ τὸ περὶ Τυφῶνος τεραστίως λογοποιηθέν.

Later on, Marchinus van der Valk, in his monumental edition of Eustathius' commentary on Homer's *Iliad*, was able to add another two anonymous quotations from *Dion.* 1.270 and 1.300–301,[34] in the second of which Eustathius refers to Nonnus as "a rhetor":

(1) ad Hom. *Il.*3.271–272 (I, 650.25–26 van der Valk): ὅμοιον δὲ καὶ τὰ δάκτυλα καὶ τὰ χαλινὰ καὶ τὰ ταρσὰ δέ, ὡς τὸ "βένθεϊ ταρσὰ πέπηκτο" [*Dion.* 1.270].

(2) ad Hom. *Il.* 13.530 (III, 509.24–25 van der Valk): βομβεῖν δέ τις ῥήτωρ[35] φησὶ καὶ βροντήν [cf. *Dion.* 1.300–301 βροντὴ κωφὸν ἔπεμπεν ἀδουπήτου μέλος ἠχοῦς / ἠρέμα βομβήσασα].

Commenting on Eustathius' working method, van der Valk, in an insightful article published in 1983, mentioned three passages of Callimachus' *Hymns*, which Eustathius quotes in his Homeric commentaries, and compared these citations from Callimachus' *Hymns* with Eustathius' quotations from Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*. In both cases we may infer that the archbishop of Thessalonica used to quote the first line of a poem—the one most likely to be remembered—and that he relied for his quotations on a prodigious memory that sometimes deceived him:

32 In fact, Eustathius omits ἄπιστον after ὄγκον.

33 Keydell 1959, I, 10*–11*.

34 See the sources and parallels cited by van der Valk in Keizer 1995, Index IV, s.v. Nonnus, Dionys. As Janko 1995 observes in his review of Keizer's work, "one is amazed at the diversity and number of sources which Van der Valk was able to identify from his own reading."

35 On Eustathius' use of the term ῥήτωρ for Nonnus, see van der Valk 1971–1987, I, xciii: "Usus denique vocis 'rhetor' apud eum tam late patet, ut, mirabile dictu, hoc epitheto etiam poëtas vel Lexicographos denotet."

> Once (1665.47) he refers in general to the fifth hymn with regard to the blinding of Teiresias (*Hymn.* 5.57–64, 70–72). Again, the first line of the sixth hymn he quotes three times (1208.37, 1488.60, 1627.49 f). Finally, he quotes an entire line (55) from the first hymn (1687.40). I believe that this limited scope of his citations can be explained. The learned scholar in the course of his extensive readings read Callimachus' Hymns, possibly cursorily. He retained the episode of Teiresias, and he was likewise struck by the curious invocation of the *kalathos* of *Hymn.* 6.1, which occurred, moreover, in the first line, the position in a poem most likely to be remembered. The third instance, comprising an entire line, occurred in the first hymn. It is obvious here that Eustathius was quoting from memory, for he wrongly gives ταχὰ μὲν ἠέξευ whereas Callimachus had written καλὰ μὲν ἠέξευ. For his memorization of an entire line, and from the first book, we may compare his treatment of Nonnus. Eustathius quotes Nonnus only rarely, and his quotations come exclusively from the first book of the *Dionysiaca*. It is surely understandable that an author as prolific as Eustathius, who had read innumerable authors, sometimes read or knew accurately only the first part, the beginning of a book.[36]

Moreover, Eustathius' treatment of Nonnus' poem is quite different, as van der Valk noted, from that toward the *Posthomerica* of Quintus of Smyrna, a work Eustathius was well acquainted with.[37] We may also add that both Eustathius and the *Etymologicum Magnum* (280.9, citing *Dion.* 9.11–12, 17b and 19–24), which probably found a copy of the *Dionysiaca* in the same Constantinople library,[38] do not mention Nonnus' name, as Francesco Tissoni has recently remarked.[39] From such an argument, both Aubrey Diller and Robert Browning

36 Van der Valk 1983, 368; cf. van der Valk 1982, 236 n. 6.

37 Van der Valk 1971–1987, I, xcii: "E poëtis Graecitatis posterioris Posthomerica Quinti Smyrnaei Eustathio, ni fallor, optime nota erant, quamquam in Commentario eum non saepe laudat. E contrario Nonni Dionysiaca videtur primis tantum labris gustavisse, nam eum perraro citat et, quod est gravius, loci, quos affert, omnes e primo libro Dionysiacorum desumpti sunt." Eustathius was also familiar with Oppian, the author of the *Halieutica*, see Dyck 1982.

38 Diller 1938, 336: "The *Dionysiaca* of Nonnus were used by Eustathius and the *Etym. Magnum* (280, 9 ff), but elsewhere only by Max. Planudes (*ca.* 1300), who owned the sole codex in which they have survived. The *Etym. Genuinum*, now preserved in only two MSS., was also used by Eustathius and the two Etymologi [i.e. *Etymologicum Magnum* and Symeon's *Etymologicum*], and Eustathius and the so-called *Etym. Magnum* both call the *Genuinum* τὸ μέγα ἐθυμολογικόν. We may infer that Eustathius and the Etymologi used the same library in Constantinople."

39 Tissoni 2016, 699.

claimed that Byzantine writers were unfamiliar with the poet of the *Dionysiaca*,[40] a conclusion that Barry Baldwin did not agree with:

> Nonnus was one of *the* poets—any educated Byzantine would know who had written the *Dionysiaca*. At any rate, the single anonymous mention in the *Etymologicum Magnum* does not imply that Nonnus was generally unknown to the later Byzantines and not recognised as the author of the *Dionysiaca*. No one would seriously maintain that Agathias had fallen into obscurity at this time. Yet the Etymologicum Magnum cites him only once as well, and then without attaching his name to the quotation (218.13, citing *Hist.* 1.24).
>
> Furthermore, take *AP* 9.198:
>
> Νόννος ἐγώ· Πανὸς μὲν ἐμὴ πόλις, ἐν Φαρίῃ δὲ
> ἔγχεϊ φωνήεντι γονὰς ἤμησα Γιγάντων.
>
> Clearly a familiar epigram, given its inclusion in the Anthology. A reader would have to be impressively obtuse not to deduce from it that Nonnus was the author of the *Dionysiaca*, especially as the last two words of the couplet are virtually a direct quote from it (5.2, changing the verb from third to first person). A cognate witness to the circulation of Nonnus' epic is *AP* 10.120, in actual fact no more than *Dion.* 42.209–210.[41]

Thus Eustathius, in his commentaries on Homer and Dionysius Periegetes, quotes anonymously and inaccurately a few lines from book 1 alone of the *Dionysiaca*, Nonnus' major work, and passes over the *Paraphrase* in silence.[42] And yet it is Eustathius himself who adds the marginal gloss on Nonnus in the *Marcianus* manuscript containing the *Suda*, where the poet is identified

40 Diller 1953; Browning 1960, 17: "There is little sign of acquaintance with Nonnos among earlier Byzantine writers. Eustathios quotes five passages without naming the author, and the Etymologicum Magnum mentions the work once. Planudes' exemplar [*Laurentianus plut.* 32.16] must have been a great rarity, and may have been very old. The number of lines which he marks as his own interpolations suggests that it was damaged. Though, of course, we have no basis for comparison, we must recognize the possibility that Planudes found the Dionysiaka in an uncial manuscript, and made the first and only transliteration into minuscule at the end of the thirteenth century."

41 Baldwin 1983, 111.

42 On the contrary, Eustathius' quotations from Euripides are quite accurate: see Miller 1940, 422; Zuntz 1955, 147–151. For Eustathius' manner of quoting from different sources in his commentary on the *Iliad*, see Pagani 2017, esp. 82: "In fact Eustathius' work, far from being the creature of a merely mechanical compilator, was that of an erudite scholar who, perhaps wishing to appear even more erudite, sometimes offered no mention, or barely a generic mention, of the source from which he was drawing his material."

as the author of the *Paraphrase*, apparently without mentioning the *Dionysiaca*. However, in the clause ὁ καὶ τὸν παρθένον Θεολόγον παραφράσας δι' ἐπῶν, the conjunction καί clearly acts as an "additive marker,"[43] that is, "he is the one who *also* paraphrased the chaste Theologian in epic verse," and not just, as previously translated (see above), "he is the one who paraphrased ..." But if καί does mean "also," it must hint at other works of Nonnus of which Eustathius was aware and to which the first part of the *Suda*'s marginal gloss may allude.[44]

Does the epithet λογιώτατος, which Eustathius applies to Homer in a note on book 5 of the *Iliad* (II, 1.13–14 van der Valk: καὶ δεικνύει οὕτως ὁ λογιώτατος Ὅμηρος, οἷα ὁ λόγος δύναται),[45] and borrows from Herodotus (3.1) in his commentary on Dionysius Periegetes (*GGM* II, 258.36–38: Λέγει δὲ καὶ Ἡρόδοτος πρώτους ἀνθρώπων Αἰγυπτίους ἐξευρεῖν τὸν ἐνιαυτόν, καὶ ὅτι τῶν Αἰγυπτίων οἱ Ἡλιουπολῖται λογιώτατοι), refer, by any chance, to the huge and learned poem on Dionysus written by Nonnus? In fact, on palaeographical evidence, it seems that Eustathius copied the *Suda* during the composition of the Homeric commentaries (*post* 1160–*ante* 1175/1177, while the commentary on Dionysius Periegetes dates back to c. 1160[46]), or probably after the commentary on the *Iliad* and during the draft of that on the *Odyssey*.[47] Most probably Eustathius knew Nonnus as the author of the *Dionysiaca* only in the final period of his exegetical work on Homer. He could, therefore, have referred fleetingly to him as λογιώτατος in the addition in the *Suda*.

Admittedly, this is only a hypothesis, but it would resolve the embarrassing problem of the *Suda*'s, that is Eustathius', apparent silence on Nonnus' major poem.[48]

It is also remarkable that Claudio De Stefani, in a recent paper on the manuscript tradition of Nonnus, came to a similar conclusion about the absence of Nonnus' name in *Laurentianus plut.* 32.16 (L), the Florentine MS that contains the *Dionysiaca* and was copied at Constantinople in 1280 in the circle of Maximus Planudes, and two contrasting notes by the hand of the same

43 For the "thematic addition," see Rounge 2010, 337–348.
44 See now my revised translation (27 September 2015) of the *Suda* passage in *SOL* s.v. Νόνναι.
45 For Eustathius, Homer is a model of rhetoric, see Nünlist 2012; Cullhed 2014, 213.
46 Cf. Diller 1975, 181.
47 Formentin 1983, 43. On the Homeric commentaries as "lifelong works" see Cesaretti 2014, 22–24.
48 According to an ingenious suggestion by Agosti 1999, 107–108, Politianus may have echoed *Suda*'s marginal gloss on Nonnus in a passage of the second Centuria of his *Miscellanea* (46.21), where he ascribes *Dion.* 33.278–279 to the "poeta ingeniosissimus, et ipse tamen christianus"; cf. Gonnelli 2003, 23.

monk in *Marcianus gr.* 481, coll. 863 (N), the celebrated MS of the *Anthologia Planudea* dated to 1301, which also contains Nonnus' *Paraphrase*. In the first note (fol. 100ᵛ), Planudes ascribes the *Paraphrase* to the philosopher Ammonius of Alexandria (Ἀμμωνίου φιλοσόφου καὶ ῥήτορος μεταβολὴ τοῦ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγελίου), but in another note (fol. 122ᵛ) he also refers to Nonnus as the author of the Christian poem (καὶ παρά τισι μὲν λέγεται εἶναι ἡ μεταβολὴ ἀμμωνίου ἀλεξανδρέως φιλοσόφου, παρ' ἄλλοις δὲ νόνου [*sic*] ποιητοῦ [τοῦ del. Spanoudakis] πανοπολίτου). Even in this case, as De Stefani has suggested, we may infer that Planudes, who transmitted the *Dionysiaca* as an anonymous work in 1280, came to identify its author in c. 1301, when the Constantinople monk knew that the poet of Panopolis was probably the author of the *Paraphrase of St. John's Gospel*:

> Given that in 1301—or perhaps later, since the note to fo. 122ᵛ is an addition *in calce*—Planudes knew Nonnus as a possible author of the *Paraphrase*, while in 1280 he had penned the *Dionysiaca* as an anonymous poem, it is possible that twenty years after the copying of L he had got a better knowledge of the *Dionysiaca*, and was able to identify its author, as he learned of the possible Nonnian authorship of the *Paraphrase*.[49]

This is a speculative hypothesis too, yet offers, as well as for Eustathius, a key to understanding the problematic silence of Planudes on the authorship of the *Dionysiaca*.[50]

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49 De Stefani 2016, 678. On the note to fol. 122ᵛ in *Marcianus gr.* 481, see also Pontani 2015, 414.

50 Cf. Livrea 1989, 73 n. 4.

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CHAPTER 25

Boom Years of Nonnian Studies: On the Reception of Nonnus in Germany (1880–1976)

Fabian Sieber

1 Introduction

At the turn of the nineteenth century, classical antiquity was perceived as a focal point for the creation of a national identity in Germany. In a speech given on the occasion of the Kaisers Geburtstag (Kaiser's Birthday), Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff discussed Athenian democracy in order to illuminate contemporary Germany's situation.[1] He justified his choice of topic by citing the *imperium Atheniense* as the one and only attempt made in antiquity to unify a nation by founding a federal state and analogized Athens and the newly founded German Empire of 1871.[2] His approach—seeing the so-called *Preussischen Tugenden* (Prussian virtues) as an actualization of classical Greek values—seems odd from today's perspective, although in his own times his contribution to the ongoing discussion on national self-assurance was considered to be substantial.

This episode illustrates how very ripe the cultural settings in Germany around 1900 were for facilitating the study of Greek and Roman antiquity. However, at the same time, Nonnus was condemned as being a postclassical author of dubious importance. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff described his epic as deformed, disharmonic, and noxious and stated that the *Dionysiaca* was nothing more than a "widernatürliches Kunstprodukt," a perverted product of art.[3]

In this chapter I reconstruct the fate of Nonnus and his work in this specific historical setting, focusing on the poet's reception in Germany between the years of 1880 and 1976, that is, between the publication of Scheindler's critical edition of the *Paraphrase of the Gospel of John*, and the publication of the first

1 Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1877. The speech was held in the name of the University of Greifswald on the occasion of the 80th birthday of Kaiser Wilhelm I.
2 Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1877, 31: "… den einzigen Versuch des Altertums, die Einigung eines Volkes durch einen Bundesstaat zu erzielen."
3 Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1912, 287–288.

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volume of Vian's critical edition of the same work.[4] This is a broad and diverse subject, for Nonnus' influence was not limited to the academic field (which I will discuss in the first part of the chaper); it also affected the activities of literary circles (which I will turn to in the second part). It is striking to see how the understanding of Nonnus has changed over time. While Nonnus never gained the standing of a 'classical' author, his work became more and more influential during the years following the preparation of Scheindler's critical edition.

2 Nonnus and the Academic World

Nonnus' work had already found its way into compendia of the history of Greek literature by around 1900.[5] Accordingly, he was not only accessible to experts but also at the level of undergraduate and graduate studies. Moreover, thanks to published editions of the *Dionysiaca* and the *Paraphrase*, his accessibility was further facilitated and promoted.[6] These efforts produced certain reverberations on the level of scholarly discussion, ultimately prompting a wealth of publications suggesting conjectures to the editions by Ludwich[7] and Scheindler.[8]

Despite Wilamowitz-Moellendorff's harsh criticism, scholarly discussion of Nonnus and his work continued. Moreover, Wilamowitz-Moellendorff's own students intensified their research on Nonnus over the years. Paul Maas (1880–1964), Paul Friedländer (1882–1968), Rudolf Keydell (1887–1982), and Werner Peek (1904–1994), all major proponents of German-language classical philology in the twentieth century and followers of Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, sooner or later turned their scholarly attention to Nonnus.[9] In the field of theology, Joseph Golega (?–1973) alone turned his scholarly interest to Nonnus and his *Paraphrase of the Gospel of John*. His doctoral dissertation "Studien über die

4 Scheindler 1881a; Vian 1976.

5 See, e.g., Baumgartner 1900; Christ 1913; Krumbacher 1912.

6 The edition of the *Dionysiaca*: Ludwich 1909–1910; the edition of the *Paraphrase*: Scheindler 1881a. Editors' supplemental publications on the poems include, on *Dionysiaca*, Ludwich 1873, 1908, 1911, 1913, 1918; on *Paraphrase*, Scheindler 1880, 1881b, 1882.

7 Here belong three dissertations: Schönewolf 1909; Arnolds 1913; and Braun 1915, besides Ludwich's own subsequent publications.

8 Hilberg 1880; Ludwich 1880; Seume 1882; Tiedke 1873, 1879a, 1879b, 1880a, 1880b, 1883, 1914, 1915, 1918, 1923, also summarizing reviews in Ehrhard 1894, 178–179; and Keydell 1931a, 99–122.

9 Maas was editor of Wilamowitz-Moellendorff's "Kleine Schriften" (Maas 1935a). Friedländer and Keydell were advised by Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (Friedländer 1905; Keydell 1911), and Peek was supported by Wilamowitz-Moellendorff during the production of his thesis (Peek 1929). For biographical details on Maas, see Krämer 2011, 37–44; on Friedländer, Mensching 2002; on Keydell, Beck 1978, XIII–XIV; on Peek, Queitsch 1997, 14.

Evangeliendichtung des Nonnos von Panopolis" was devoted to the work.[10] While Golega himself was quite enthusiastic to return to Nonnus in subsequent years,[11] his publications were not able to drive research on Nonnus in theology. Thus, he remained an isolated figure in academia, as research on the *Paraphrase* was a non-topic in academic philology in these times.

2.1 *Paul Maas*

Paul Maas' interest in Nonnus was stimulated by Ludwich's edition of the *Dionysiaca*. He reviewed its two volumes[12] and commented on Ludwich's supplementary publications.[13] However, he only started to conduct genuine research on Nonnus and his *Dionysiaca* after the First World War. Between 1921 and 1927 he published six short articles on Nonnus.[14] These publications contain conjectures on the text of the *Dionysiaca*[15] and observations on Nonnian metric, chronology and transmission history.[16] His interest remained active in his later years, and he continued to read and review new publications on Nonnus and his works.[17] As Maas' attention was primarily devoted to Byzantine literature, his interest in Nonnus and scholarly open-mindedness might be explained by his general focus on postclassical literature.

2.2 *Paul Friedländer*

Indeed, the same is also true for Paul Friedländer. He is well known to Nonnus scholars for his publication on the chronology of Nonnus, which appeared in 1912,[18] as well as for his contribution "Vorklassisch und Nachklassisch" to the *Naumburger Tagung: Das Problem des Klassischen und die Antike*.[19] In the latter publication he reflected on the concept of classical literature as advocated by Wilamowitz-Moellendorff by contrasting it with recourse on Nonnus and his

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10 Golega 1930.

11 Golega 1960. 1966.

12 Maas 1910, 1911.

13 Maas 1914.

14 Maas 1921c, 1921d, 1922, 1923a, 1923b, 1927.

15 Discussing *Dion.* 47.356 (Maas 1921c); *Dion.* 7.180–184, 30.213–219, 14.364, 3.399, 35.27–32, 38.190–216 (Maas 1921d); *Dion.* 13.56–60, 18.273–285, 20.354–358, 21.77, 23.236, 25.223, 34.45–50, 34.126, 40.319, 50.358–362, 42.304, 47.466–469, 48.630 (Maas 1922); *Dion.* 10.303, 38.206, 38.202, 16.318, 35.246, 30.165, 48.483–486 (Maas 1923b).

16 Metric: Maas 1923a and Maas 1927; chronology: Maas 1923b, esp. XIX; transmission: Maas 1923b, esp. XX.

17 Maas reviewed Stegemann 1930b (Maas 1930, Maas 1932); Golega 1930 (Maas 1932); Wifstrand 1933 (Maas 1934); Braune 1935 (Maas 1935b).

18 Friedländer 1912.

19 Friedländer 1931.

Dionysiaca. He thus came to a concept of classical literature—i.e. *paideia*—that constituted itself as an act of "Bändigung." Nonnus here appears as an "untamed" author. His poetry is less about human beings than about monsters; it is less about telling and narrating than about screaming and "wilde dionysische Klänge"; it is less about naturalness than about wantonness; and finally, the plot is to be read allegorically, be it "prototypisch oder symbolisch oder magisch."[20] At the same moment, however, it is evident that his interest in Nonnus was much wider and deeper—and positively connotated. Already in 1916, in a letter to Wilamowitz-Moellendorff Friedländer refers to Nonnus as his "friend" and defends him as an example of "baroque poetry" which should not be interpreted in terms of classical poetry but instead warrants interpretation in its own right.[21] Although he adopts Wilamowitz-Moellendorff's criticism and categorizes Nonnus as a postclassical author, he reaches the opposite conclusion: while Wilamowitz-Moellendorff was not interested in Nonnus because of his postclassical character, Friedländer finds the poet attractive precisely for this reason. It is noticeable that Friedländer anticipates here a position he will express and redevelop fourteen years later in the *Naumburger Tagung*.

Friedländer appears to have been successful in lobbying for Nonnus. In 1929, Wilamowitz-Moellendorff wrote a short letter to him, stating his interest in Nonnus.[22] Wilamowitz-Moellendorff encouraged Friedländer to publish a commented selection of the poet and indicated his own interest in the story of Beroe, the main protagonist of books 41–42 of the *Dionysiaca*; however, Wilamowitz-Moellendorff was unable to work on it because he had lost his copy of the text, while Friedländer was also unable to continue his Nonnian studies due to his forced emigration to the USA and the associated loss of academic institutional affiliation.

2.3 *The Circle of Rudolf Keydell and Werner Peek*

Due to his stable institutional affiliation throughout his lifetime, Rudolf Keydell could become the major contributor to research on Nonnus. Like Paul Maas, he started to work on Nonnus in the early 1920s, and from 1923 to 1961 published fourteen articles on Nonnus,[23] was responsible for the entry on Nonnus in *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie*,[24] and reviewed important contributions by other

20 Friedländer 1931, 43–46.
21 Calder 1999, 103.
22 Calder 1999, 179–180.
23 Keydell 1923, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1932a, 1932b, 1932c, 1933, 1936a, 1944, 1953, 1955, 1961.
24 Keydell 1937.

scholars.[25] His *opus magnum* was, of course, his edition of the *Dionysiaca*.[26] This publication was even more impressive if one takes into account that Keydell had to overcome his own prejudices on Nonnus to write it. For example, when he was reviewing the edition of Ludwich (1912), he recognized the need for further studies in textual criticism of the text "wenn jemand die Mühe an einen Autor verschwenden will, den niemand liest" ("if somebody wants to waste so much work on an author nobody reads").[27]

Perhaps even more important than his own scholarship was his ability to inspire research on Nonnus and his work. Werner Peek, sometimes referred to as the last follower of Wilamowitz-Moellendorff,[28] undertook the challenge to work on the text provided by Keydell's edition. As early as 1957, he announced his plan to create a lexicon for the *Dionysiaca* which, however, was only finished after the death of both Wilamowitz-Moellendorff and Friedländer. It was published in four volumes between 1968 and 1975.[29] Around the same time, he wrote commentary on selected passages of the poem.[30]

However, above all, Peek was able to form a circle of collaborating scholars, who not only helped him to compile the lexicon but also worked on Nonnus on their own. Joachim-Friedrich Schulze appears to have been the most important figure of those inspired by Peek.[31] He worked on a doctoral project on the *Dionysiaca* with Peek as an advisor, finishing it in 1961.[32] In 1970, he finished his *Habilitationsschrift* on the *Dionysiaca*, again with Peek as an advisor.[33] He stayed at the University of Halle until his retirement in 1990. His lasting commitment to Nonnian studies is expressed in several articles on Nonnus and his *Dionysiaca*.[34]

Dietrich Ebener was another well-known philologist and Nonnus scholar of the time.[35] His metric translations from Greek as well as from Latin are numerous and include a translation of the complete works of Euripides. His translation style was widely recognized and made him one of the most influ-

25 Keydell 1931b on Golega 1930; Keydell 1934 on Wifstrand 1933; Keydell 1936b on Braune 1935; Keydell 1973 on Peek 1969.
26 Keydell 1959.
27 Keydell 1931a, 95.
28 Hölscher 1995, 66.
29 Peek 1957, 1968–1975.
30 Peek 1969.
31 For Schulze's biography, see Schulz and Macke 2010, 282–283; and Mertens 2006, 560.
32 Schulze 1961.
33 Schulze 1970.
34 Schulze 1965, 1966, 1968, 1969a, 1969b, 1971, 1973, 1985, 1990.
35 For biographical details on Ebener, see Oldach 2015, 88–91.

ential translators of the classics in Germany.[36] He finished his PhD in 1954 and his *Habilitationsschrift* two years later, on both occasions, Peek was his advisor.[37] Eventually, inspired by the works of Peek, he became recognized as a Nonnus scholar himself and in later years published metric translations of the *Dionysiaca* and the *Paraphrase* into German. Although these texts are not suitable for academic research of Nonnus,[38] they are important achievements, and his translation of the *Paraphrase* made for the first time the whole text available in German.

Finally, Margarete Riemschneider must be mentioned.[39] Although living in Leipzig around that time, she was closely connected to Peek's circle due to a shared interest in Greek and Roman literature and art. She contributed several articles on Nonnus in which she analyzed stylistic features in his poetry as well as some aspects of Nonnian geography.[40] Even more important than her academic works may be her historical novel devoted to Nonnus, which contributed to popularization of knowledge about Greek culture of Late Antiquity and promoted Greek poetry.[41] She has thus served as a link between Nonnian research of the 1970s and earlier literary attempts to use Nonnus as a source of inspiration, as in Stefan George's circle and in the works of Thassilo von Scheffer.

3 Nonnus and the Literary World

Hidden in the works of the well-known German poet Stefan George there are made rather cryptic references to Nonnus and his works.[42] At the same moment one is confronted with a challenge in trying to reconstruct the given hints, for it seems that George never mentioned the name "Nonnus." However, he wrote a eulogy to Mallarmé in which he certainly could have been referring to Nonnus. Here are his words:

> Wir wissen auch noch welchen starken eindruck die schriften der Byzantiner und Spatlateiner in uns hinterliessen … wie manchmal die schw-

36 See Mindt 2009, 325–328.
37 Ebener 1954, 1956.
38 Ebener 1985. For criticism, see Grillmeier 1990, 101.
39 For biographical details, see Gewolls 2011.
40 Riemschneider 1957, 1965, 1968.
41 Riemschneider 1970.
42 For background on George and his circle, see Karlauf 2007.

> ergeborenen verse des heissblutigen Ägypters die mänaden gleich jagen und brausen uns vor denen des alten Homer mit wollust erfüllt.[43]
>
> We still remember the strong impression on us caused by the works of those Byzantines and late Romans … as the heavy-born verses of the hot-blooded Egyptian—hunting and blowing like the Maenads—served our desire more than those of good old Homer.

On this basis, it is difficult to substantiate George's knowledge of Nonnus; it remains unclear how much of his poetry George could have read and under what circumstances. Therefore, rather than as an allusion to Nonnus, it should be read as a programmatic statement, stressing the importance of postclassical literature. It is not quite clear which authors George had in mind when he referred to the writings of Byzantine and Late Antique Latin authors.[44] However, it is clear that he did not evoke the ideal of the Classical *paideia* as propagated and favored by the Wilhelmine educated middle class, but instead referred to more obscure and neglected sources of knowledge. Accordingly, it is less a reference to a definite passage and more a literary gesture, evoking a supreme knowledge of unappreciated sources.[45]

The activities of George's pupils are also noteworthy. Of particular importance is Friedrich Wolters, who published a collection of ancient Christian hymns, translated into German, and included two short passages by Nonnus: *Par.* 1.1–23 and *Par.* 10.140–156.[46] Wolters' metric translation is less a testimony to an advanced study of Nonnus than a literary gesture, leading to praise from his audience for his literary expertise and postclassical knowledge.

Another instance of Nonnus' presence in German literature comes from Fritz von Herzmanovsky-Orlando, a truly colorful character who was linked to several occult and esoteric societies in the Weimar Republic. His novel *Masken-*

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43 George 1925, 53.

44 For suggestions, see Morwitz 1962, 40.

45 Unfortunately, it is not known through what sources George came to know about Nonnus. Taking into account his affiliation with the Bohemian culture of Munich, one could assume his dependency on the writings of Helena Blavatsky and her Theosophical Movement. For the reception of Nonnus by Blavatsky, see Blavatsky 1877, vol. 1, 142; 1877, vol. 2, 504–505; 1893, vol. 2, 144. For the significance of theosophical beliefs and convictions in Munich at the turn of the century, see Hermand 2013, 146–147.

46 Wolters 1923, 55–56. In 1964 Erica Simon referred to an untracked "Übertragung des Nonnus von F. Wolters" (Simon 1964, 284, n. 30). It seems possible to link her clue with Wolters' translation.

spiel der Genien was written in 1929, but published only posthumously in 1958.[47] When Cyriak von Pizzicolli, the protagonist of the novel is sent to a mental institution, he is welcomed by the institute's mad director. To reconstruct his patient's psychiatric history, director Schnopfdieterich asks him several rather strange questions:

> Dann fragte er [Direktor Schnopfdieterich] ihn mit einem jähen unerwarteten Stich des beringten Zeigefingers in die Richtung des Sonnengeflechts: 'Haben Sie etwa die Experimentaldämonologie des Silvinius Čwecko gelesen? … nein? Wie stellen Sie sich zu den 'Dionysiaka des Nonnos'?! Oder sind Sie ein Opfer des Elifas Lévi in der Helga Kundtischen Übersetzung und Kommentierung? Sind Sie der Zahlenmagie des Hulisch verfallen oder haben sie 'Salz und Raum' von Maak gelesen? Hümhüm, werden wir gleich haben!' …[48]

> Then he [Rector Schnopfdieterich] asked him, by poking his ringed index finger unexpectedly in direction of the solar plexus … Have you read the Experimental-Demonology of Silvinius Čwecko … no? What is your position to the Dionysiaca of Nonnus?! Or are you a victim of Elifas Lèvi in translation and commentary of Helga Kundt? Are you forfeited to the magic of numbers of Hulisch or have you read "Salt and Space" by Maak? Ahem ahem, we'll get it out soon! …

As strange as the works listed here by the director might appear, it is possible to identify them, at least in some cases.[49] However, without question, all of these books are rather peculiar and belong to non-mainstream literature. If the *Dionysiaca* is placed in such a context, it is clearly identified as a work about occult knowledge: whoever knows Nonnus' work and the ideas evoked by it is able to pass the examination and is allowed to advance to the mental asylum. Accordingly, Nonnus is once again used as a cultural marker.

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47 For further details on Herzmanovsky-Orlando, see the commentary of Susanna Goldberg in Herzmanovsky-Orlando 1989, 429–609.

48 Herzmanovsky-Orlando 1989, 40.

49 In her commentary, Goldberg reconstructed several sources Herzmanovsky-Orlando could have used. She mentions that Eliphas Lévi was a pseudonym used by Alphonse Louis Constant, author of books on Kabbala; Helga Kundt was a translator known to Hermanovsky; and a book by Johannes Hulisch does exist (Herzmanovsky-Orlando 1989, 495). Indeed, there exists even the "Experimentaldämonologie": Josef Dürr, *Experimental-Dämonologie: Anleitung zum zitieren von Dämonen*: Leipzig 1926.

4 Thassilo von Scheffer and the *Nonnos Gesellschaft*

The so-called *Nonnos Gesellschaft* “founded” by Thassilo von Scheffer operated in the same framework and cultural context as Herzmanovsky-Orlando. In 1924, Thassilo von Scheffer started to lobby to establish a Nonnus society. He was able to do so owing to his reputation as a translator and scholar of Homer.[50] His merits were strong, especially when the pressing political and economic situation of postwar Germany of the time is taken into account. On January 21, 1924, he wrote to Börries von Münchhausen to share his idea and suggested finding culturally interested sponsors to raise a sum of 10,000–15,000 marks per year to create two full-time positions for seven years to work on a metric translation of the *Dionysiaca* into German.[51] The project to translate Nonnus is thus clearly identified as a kind of crowd-funded project based upon subscriptions. To call this a *Nonnos Gesellschaft* was clearly somewhat of an exaggeration, as previously pointed out by Viktor Ehrenberg, who in his review of the first five parts of von Scheffer’s translation wrote:

> Wenn es für die materielle Fundierung nötig war, eine “Nonnos-Gesellschaft” zu gründen, so ist diese etwas komische Tatsache durch das vorliegende Werk reichlich entschuldigt.[52]
>
> While it might have been necessary to create a “Nonnos Gesellschaft” for reasons of funding, this somewhat comical fact is more than excused given the published work.

Von Münchhausen’s response has not been preserved, although we know from von Scheffer’s second letter (dated January 24, 1924) that von Münchhausen was supportive and that although he was unable to provide money, he was willing to offer non-material support to the project. As the translation project initiated by von Scheffer was completed successfully,[53] it appears that von Münchhausen’s support was helpful in some way. We get a glimpse of how von Scheffer tried to persuade possible donors to support him in a leaflet preserved

50 See Scheffer 1913, 1918, 1921, 1925.
51 Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen, Cod Ms B.v. Münchhausen, 165:18.
52 Ehrenberg 1927, 1066.
53 Other projects of the time were also based upon subscriptions; however, due to a lack of support, they were not realized. A fine example is given by Paul Maas: in 1921, he promoted a project to edit the hymns of Romanos Melodos (Maas 1921a). Due to a lack of support, the project was never even initiated (Maas 1921b).

in his correspondence with von Münchhausen in which he explains the aim of the planned *Gesellschaft*. To attract potential supporters, von Scheffer strived to place the *Dionysiaca* in a rather peculiar context:

> Die Dichtung behandelt Leben und Taten des Dionysos und besonders seinen Zug nach Indien. Dieser äussere Rahmen aber dient Nonnos dazu, nicht nur eine Menge tiefer Mythologien, Legenden und Sagen des Altertums hinein zu verflechten, sondern das Ganze ist durchtränkt von der Mystik, dem geheimen östlichen Wissen, das wir z.B. in der Gnosis finden, und vielen religiösen Anspielungen und Überlieferungen, wie sie in jener Zeit des Zusammenströmens so vieler Kulte in Alexandrien, dem geistigen Mittelpunkt jener Zeit, noch lebendig waren. Als Dichtung wird das Epos dadurch natürlich etwas barock überladen und sein Rahmen fast gesprengt, dafür öffnet sich uns eine schier unerschöpfliche Fundgrube metaphysischer Vorstellungen kosmisch-astraler Art.[54]

> The poem deals with the life and deeds of Dionysus and special focus is placed on his campaign to India. This broader context provides a background for Nonnus not only to weave into it a multitude of ancient mythologies, legends and tales: the whole text is imbued with mystical knowledge and the secret wisdom of the East; think of Gnosticism, for example, with its many religious allusions and traditions, as present and still vivid in those times in Alexandria—a melting pot of cultures and an intellectual center of the world. While the poetics of the epic therefore tends to a baroque pompousness and the scope of the plot is taken to its breaking point, at the same time we experience a plentiful source of metaphysical ideas of a cosmic–astral nature.

Von Scheffer explained that *Dionysiaca* is not only about Dionysus and his campaign to India, but also about mythology, "mysticism," and the "secret of the East," as is also found in "Gnosticism." The poem is presented as an example of the syncretistic culture of Late Antique Alexandria and, as such, presents "cosmic–astral perspectives of metaphysics."[55] Von Scheffer's characterization of the *Dionysiaca* uses Nonnus as a cultural marker. His description of Nonnus and his work is less explanative and argumentative than dogmatic and defining. His habitus is thus entirely compatible with the mode of interpretation of

54 Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen, Cod Ms B.v. Münchhausen, 165:18.
55 This characterization is repeated in Scheffer 1927.

Nonnus common to Stefan George's circle. This feeling is substantiated when the background of Thassilo von Scheffer and his *Nonnos Gesellschaft* supporters is assessed. First, Börries von Münchhausen himself was a crucially important figure for the Völkisch movement in the Weimar Republic. In an anthology of contemporary German poets published in 1939, von Münchhausen is praised as a defender of the German nation considered as a "community of blood."[56] This appraisal is justified if one remembers that von Münchhausen was not only exempted from military service during World War II; in 1944, he was also named on the "Gottbegnadeten list," comprising 1041 people considered "irreplaceable" and of crucial importance to Nazi culture.[57] Accordingly, when von Münchhausen declared his willingness to support the *Nonnos Gesellschaft*, it placed the project in a quite peculiar cultural and political setting. This impression is substantiated by checking the membership list of the society.[58] At this point, I do not wish to focus on public figures,[59] but rather two individuals who are of importance to Nonnian studies, namely Hans Bogner and Viktor Stegemann.

4.1 *Hans Bogner and Viktor Stegemann*

Hans Bogner was not only a member of the *Nonnos Gesellschaft*, but also worked for some time with Thassilo von Scheffer on preparing the translation of the *Dionysiaca*. For the first volume of the translation, he wrote commentary on books 1–25. In his later years, he contributed to the discussion on Nonnus' religious background. It was at this point that he broke with von Scheffer and disassociated himself from the *Nonnos Gesellschaft*.[60] At the same time, he became a prolific author of contributions to fascist theory from the perspective of philology and ancient history.[61] Being a member of the national socialist Institute for Research of the Jewish Question and having good contacts with the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, he was appointed professorships at the University of Freiburg and the Reichsuniversität Straßburg.[62] As far as I understand, he was the only philologist to be mentioned in Armin Mohler's book *Die Konser-*

56 See Langenbucher 1939, 36.
57 See Rathkolb 1991, 176.
58 A list of the members of the *Nonnos Gesellschaft* is found on the first pages of each volume of the special edition of the *Dionysiaca* printed by Parcus; see Scheffer 1925–1933.
59 See the entries on Karl Prinz von Isenburg, Bogislav Freiherr von Selchow, and Guidotto Graf Henckel Fürst von Donnersmarck in Klee 2003.
60 See Bogner 1931, 178.
61 Bogner 1934, 1930, 1932, 1937.
62 See Malitz 2006, 303–364.

vative Revolution in Deutschland 1918–1932, a kind of directory of fascist authors compiled to allow for the reorganization of fascist networks in postwar Germany.[63]

Viktor Stegemann was also a member of the *Nonnos Gesellschaft*, and is well known among those studying Nonnus for his monograph *Astrologie und Universalgeschichte*, based upon his doctoral dissertation.[64] As a former member of the National Socialist University Teacher's League (NS-Dozentenbund) and a Nazi loyal to the fascist regime, he was allowed to habilitate in 1937 and was subsequently excused from military service and appointed to a lectureship at the Reichsuniversität Prague in 1941.[65] A professorship and responsibility for the management of the Institute of Classical Philology followed in 1943. To interpret his career, one has to take into account the specific situation of Prague, where the university was in a transitional phase toward becoming a propaganda institution for promoting German culture in Eastern Europe.[66] Staff members were removed from their positions and sent to war to allow vacant positions to be filled by politically trustworthy personnel. Therefore, being entrusted with a teaching position is an implicit testimony to his political "reliability."[67] At the same moment, his contribution to Nonnus research was judged critically. While his idea to read the *Dionysiaca* as a panegyric to Dionysus and as a poem structured around an Orphic doctrine of sin and retribution was positively echoed,[68] his idea to contextualize the *Dionysiaca* against the background of Persian astrological conceptions was rejected. In the words of Bogner:[69]

> Der Nonnos, den der Verf. schildert, ist eine Fiktion. Er verdankt einer gewaltsamen, willkürlichen Deutung des Gedichts sein Dasein, ist ein tiefsinniger und ernster Prophet, von dem blos unbegreiflich ist, wie er die Dionysiaka schreiben konnte und warum er sie gerade so schrieb.
>
> Nonnus, as portrayed by the author, is a mere fiction. He owes his existence to a violent, arbitrary interpretation of the poem; he appears to be

63 See Mohler 1950, 83.
64 Stegemann 1930a, 1930b.
65 For biographical details, see Brunholzl 1993; Sicherl 1999.
66 Mišková 2001, 257–262.
67 Stegemann documented his political convictions in publications on Caesar; see Stegemann 1939, xvii–xxvii.
68 See Rose 1931, 39.
69 Bogner 1931, 178.

> a serious and profound prophet of whom it is simply unfathomable how he could have written the *Dionysiaca* and why he wrote it in this manner.

5 Conclusion

Of course, Nonnus is not at all a fascist author; nevertheless, I have the impression that it was no coincidence that research on Nonnus somehow flourished in Germany in the inter- and post-war period. Even Wilamowitz-Moellendorff's followers were looking for new orientation and guidance. Werner Jaeger's *Naumburger Tagung* is seen as a milestone event in the process of reorienting classical philology in interwar Germany. By integrating postclassical sources into the academic curriculum, reading habits of Wilhelmine middle-class intellectuals were challenged and changed. The works on Nonnus, announced and prepared by Paul Maas and Paul Friedländer, show the important role that the poet played in this context. This is true despite the fact that Rudolf Keydell and Werner Peek finished their proposed projects and published works of major importance on Nonnus three decades later.

However, at the same time it is important to note that the idea of referring to non-classical sources and including them in the personal reading canon had already been proposed by *fin de siècle* intellectuals such as Stefan George. If there is a link between the study of Late Antique literature and fascist theory and culture, it would be felt in the need to create an alternative culture in order to generate a new national perception of Germany as a leading cultural nation. In the 1920s, the *Nonnos Gesellschaft* became a gathering place for intellectually uprooted people looking for a new orientation and, at the same time, willing to question well-established habits. Thassilo von Scheffer propagated an elitist circle of highly cultured, leading intellectuals with Nonnus as an identity-establishing Holy Grail. The role of (pre-)fascist thinkers such as Börries von Münchhausen illustrates the threats to which Nonnus research was exposed. Although it was not an accident, major proponents of Nonnus research, such as Hans Bogner and Viktor Stegemann, also played an important role in the fascist organizations of Nazi Germany. However, at the same time, the attitude toward Nonnus did not differ much from the reading habits of Wilamowitz-Moellendorff. The only difference is that Wilamowitz-Moellendorff made classical literature absolute, while in the field of Nonnian studies, the same status was given to Late Antique literature.

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